THE SEVENFOLD GIFT

OR
THE POWER
OF THE
SPIRIT

J. GOSSET TANNER

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Tanner, James Gosset.

The sevenfold gift; or, the power of the Spirit.

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SEVENFOLD GIFT;

OR,

The Power of the Spirit.

BY THE

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THE SEVENFOLD GIFT.

CHAPTER I.

The Spirit's Conbiction.

"When He is come, He will convince the world of sin."
(Margin of John xvi. 8.)

HE period of time in which we live is called the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit. If we have spiritual life, we owe it to Him; and if that life is being sustained, it is likewise the work of the same Spirit. It is by Christ that God speaks, but it is by the Spirit that He works. We read of Him in the second verse of the Bible; and as He is spoken of so early in the Scriptures, how important it must be for us to know Him. We there read: "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He has always been moving, from the very beginning.

Again, in Genesis vi. 3, we find that the Holy Spirit

strove with men before the flood; for the Lord says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Again and again the Old Testament prophets speak of Him, and predict the full outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the latter days, which came to pass on the day of Pentecost. David prays, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." (Ps. li. 11, 12.) Isaiah ascribes the sin of the house of Israel to their "rebelling and vexing God's Holy Spirit." (Isa. lxiii. 10.) God promises through Ezekiel that He will put His Spirit within the children of Israel, and that the breath thereof will cause the dry bones to live. (Ezek. xxxvi. xxxvii.) The prophecy through Joel is yet fuller and more comprehensive. "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

All we know of God has been revealed to us by His Spirit. It is impossible to apprehend Divine truth any other way. If any of us know not God, it is because we are only natural men. Of such God saith, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. ii. 14.) According to St. Paul, we are all a trinity, composed of spirit, soul, and body. The word translated "natural" is derived from the Greek word for soul, and therefore we might more accurately render the passage, "The psychic or soulish man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." His body is active, his soul and natural intellect is lively, but his spirit, the immortal part, is dormant.

The natural men at best have only "the spirit of the world," else they would "know the things that are freely given to them of God." We need that the *spirit* should be in healthy and vigorous exercise before we can discern, much less appropriate, God's gifts.

Indeed, we who preach and our hearers are alike dependent on this Divine Person. We have to speak not merely the thoughts, but "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And we can only "explain" or "interpret spiritual things to spiritual men." (See the margin of the Revised Version of I Cor. ii. 13.) There is little doubt that the context demands this translation. As the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, so it follows that spiritual things must be explained to spiritual men alone. No man has any faculty to understand the alphabet of spiritual truth without the teaching of the Spirit of the Lord.

When therefore we see the condition of the world and the Church, the prayer of every spiritual man must be, "Come from the four winds, Q breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.) For about forty years little companies of God's children have met together at the New Year to pray for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon the world. And for the last twenty-four years all the Church of Christ, in Europe, India, America, and Australia, has united in prayer that the same blessed Spirit may be poured forth for the consecration of believers, for the conversion of the heathen, and for the conviction of professing Christians. Let us, then,

prayerfully examine the subject. Why is it that so many who have been converted to God do not lead consecrated lives? It is because they do not live in the power of the Spirit. Why is it that such difference of opinion prevails among Christians? Because all do not equally seek His Divine teaching. All believers would see eye to eye were the Spirit ever present in His fulness in each heart.

The first thing for us to understand is, that the Holy Ghost is a Person, not a mere influence or emanation, as Socinians and Deists teach. See Isaiah xlviii. 16: "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and His Spirit, hath sent me." Here Christ is the Speaker, and He declares that the Father and the Holy Spirit united in sending Him into the world. How can the Holy Spirit send Christ if He be not a Person? Even if we read, with Gesenius and other scholars, "The Lord God hath sent me, and His Spirit," the second Divine Messenger must be a Person equally with the first, who can be none other than the Anointed Messiah, for He calls Himself "The Lord thy Redeemer" in the following verse. No passage in the Old Testament brings before us in so striking a form the three co-equal Persons of the blessed Trinity. So when we look at the verse which forms the special subject of our consideration: "When He is come. He will convince the world of sin." How can He come if He be not a Person? And how can He convince the world of what they are so unready to believe if He

be merely an influence? So Romans viii. 9 and 11. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." And I Cor. iii. 16. "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." The Spirit of God must be a Person if He dwells in the believer. The words have no meaning if they simply describe a principle. The proofs of this are well summed up by Ambrose Serle. "The Holy Ghost is a Person; for He creates and gives life (Job xxxiii. 4); is seen descending in a bodily shape; commands apostles, sends messengers, lifts an apostle through the air by His own power; appoints ministers in the Church; calls apostles; bestows gifts; speaks to the churches; spake by the prophets; speaketh expressly; renews His people; helpeth our infirmities; maketh intercession; reveals mysteries; searcheth all things; teacheth all things; guideth into all truth: beareth witness in earth and heaven; pronounces words of blessing; testifies of Christ, glorifies Christ; is another Comforter distinct from Christ; hath a mind of His own, hath a will of His own, hath a power of His own; hath worship performed in His name, together with the Father and the Son; hath a temple for His worship; abides with His people for ever; and by no people is blasphemed but on the peril of damnation.*

Now the first work of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of sin. The word "reprove" would be very inadequate, as Archdeacon Hare has shown in eloquent and stirring language in his *Mission of the Comforter*: "We did not need that the Spirit of

^{*} Horæ Solitariæ, vol. ii. 91.

God should come down from heaven to reprove the world of sin. The words of men, the thoughts of men, the eloquence of men, would have been sufficient to do this. Every preacher of righteousness, from the days of Noah down to the present day, has gone about reproving the world of sin. Poetry had reproved the world of sin; indeed, this is the special business of two of its branches, comedy and satire. Philosophy had reproved the world of sin; and at the time when the Spirit of God began His great work of convincing the world of sin, the reproofs of philosophy had become severer and more clamorous, yet also vainer than ever, as she sat on her stately throne in the Porch. But what is the world the . better for all this laborious reproving? How much does the world heed it, or care for it? No more than the crater of Etna cares for the roaring and lashing of the waves at its feet."

Again, "No human teacher can convince a man of sin. Conscience cannot do it. Law, in none of its forms, human or Divine, can do it. Nay, the gospel itself cannot do it. Although the word of God is the sword of the Spirit, yet, unless the Spirit of God draws forth that sword, it lies powerless in its sheath."* The revisers of 1881 have chosen the word "convict" for this passage (John xvi. 8); but, as Archdeacon Hare truly observes, "we cannot find any word in our language so well fitted for embracing the three cases as that which our translators have put in the margin." God reproves; but sin waxes mightier and mightier.

^{*} Mission of the Comforter, pp. 36, 40.

A faithful minister may point out to his congregation every Sunday that they are sinners; but this will not convince or even silence them. To give an illustration of what conviction really is. The general of a large army was besieging a small fortress, and as he knew that the garrison must be almost starved, expected to bring them to submission immediately. But the commanding-officer of this little band of soldiers was a man of dauntless bravery, and when the ambassador from the enemy arrived to propose capitulation, he called one of his soldiers, and commanded him, in the ambassador's presence, to plunge his sword into his bosom. He did so. He charged another to leap into the chasm before him, and he was obeyed. Then, turning to the ambassador, he said, "Go tell your master that we have five hundred men of similar temper, who would die rather than surrender." Thus the general was so convinced of the indomitable spirit of the garrison that he raised the siege.

Again, the captain of a vessel is on a voyage. His ship springs a leak. He invites the passengers to join the sailors in working the pumps. He determines to cling to his vessel as long as possible. At length the cargo is thrown overboard; but the ship sinks deeper and deeper in the waves. The wind rises, the billows grow stronger, the rigging is washed away. The faces of the passengers and crew grow sadder; all eyes are fixed upon the captain. At last he says, "I cannot withhold the truth from you. It is impossible for the ship to hold together five minutes longer." Thus all hope vanishes, and they are con-

vinced that no efforts of their own can procure their safety. This is what God's Spirit shews us. He convinces us that we are lost sinners. He brings us to the condition described by St. Luke: "All hope that we should be saved was then taken away." (Acts xxvii. 20.) Men will always admit that they are sinners, but they never realize that they are individually lost sinners, until it is taught them by the Holy Ghost. Then men see that all their past good deeds, even the best of them, are not worthy to be mentioned before God; that their good resolutions are as weak as the new cords before the awakening Samson. Then they admit that they are verily guilty.

When the Holy Ghost teaches you that you are a lost sinner, He sets before you the heinousness of every sin. One sin shut Adam and Eve out of God's presence. Death, bodily and spiritual, was the result of a single sin. When the Divine Spirit convinces you of this, you will cry, like Isaiah, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa. vi. 5.) You will exclaim, like Peter, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke v. 8.) In both these cases the Spirit taught the true nature of sin by shewing it as it is in the face of Jesus Christ. It is humbling to see our sin before Jesus as the King, or before Him as the loving Provider for our wants; but to see our sin in the . face of a pierced Christ is still more melting. This is how the nation of Israel will be subdued: "I will

pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn." (Zech. xii. 10.) This is the climax of the Spirit's convicting work, when He reveals our sins reflected in the face of Jesus Christ, and brings home to us the crowning sin of rejecting the Saviour wounded for our sakes.

I. What is the sin the Holy Ghost fastens on the conscience?

The 9th verse of John xvi. describes it, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." What then is the sin which the Holy Ghost brings home above all others? Is it murder? Is it ungoverned temper? Is it the sin of hasty words, or unkind thoughts? No; it is the sin of not believing in Jesus.

- I. This was the first sin ever committed. Directly the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die," the spirit of mistrust crept into Eve's heart. And the seed thus sown blossomed and bore evil fruit; for this mistrust of God has been the germ and the essence of every sin. The devil persistently whispers, "Your Father is not kind and good. He keeps you back from happiness. He gives you bitter for sweet, and evil for good." Or else he declares, "God's promises and threatenings are not faithful and true. He will never punish you eternally." The Spirit of God shews us the folly and fallacy of these arguments, and cries, "Let God be true, and every man a liar."
- 2. Unbelief in Christ is the crowning sin. That when God is ready to forgive men all their other sins,

however great and heinous, for Christ's sake, they will not come to Him that they may have life. Rejecting Christ fills up the measure of men's iniquities. The Lord Jesus says, "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." But many say, "I will not come yet;" and so their unbelief is the consummation of all their sins. It is this that keeps men back from peace and happiness, because they will not go to Him who has made peace by the blood of His cross, and who has been made exceeding glad with the joy of His Father's countenance. Again are the sad words uttered, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Do you urge, "My sin is not very great, only I have a difficulty in believing"? Only unbelief! But unbelief in Him who is Faithful and True is the most terrible sin you can commit. It casts a slur on God's truthfulness, and, like Amalek, makes war with the throne of the Eternal.

3. Unbelief in Christ is the only damning sin. Other sins may be pardoned, but this, if persisted in, cannot. "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) If you mistrust Jesus, and reject His proffered salvation, you must depart from His presence for ever. Is there any sinner declining to come to Jesus now? Then the sentence is written against you: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) Perhaps you say, "I believe in God as the Creator; I believe in Him as the God of Providence watching over me."

PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH ON THE WAY

The Jews had this belief; but what said Christ unto them? "If ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) You may even say, "I believe that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world." But this is not enough. Whatever you may believe about God's creating power, or His providential love, or even about Christ's redeeming work, unless you can say, "The Lord hath laid upon Him my sins," you will be lost. "The unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

II. Who is the Being whom men mistrust? "They believe not on Me." It is Jesus who speaks; it is He who cries, "Ye will not come unto Me, who am the Word of the Father, the Messenger of reconciliation to guilty men, who brought the tidings of liberty to those who were in the darkest dungeon, who came down from the highest heavens to a sin-stained world for you, who embraced poverty that you might be endowed with riches, who bore the curse that you might have the blessing, who chose the shame that you might have the glory, who endured a sinner's death that you might have a righteous Man's life. You will not come to Me, whose arms are wide open to receive every penitent sinner; to Me, whose nature is Mercy, and whose name is Love; to Me, who lived, and suffered, and died, and rose again for you, who ascended up to heaven, and poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost that you might live thereby."

Is it not true of you that you have denied God's Son Jesus, whom He has glorified? You have

denied Him in your household and in your business; you have denied Him as you travelled by the road, and as you walked by the way. Nay, have you not killed the Prince of Life? Did not your sins nail Him to the accursed cross? And may not Christ, as He looks at you and at His scars, exclaim, "These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends"? (Zech. xiii. 6.)

The Holy Ghost produces a certain kind of conviction even in those who never repent savingly. But its effects are very different from those produced by a godly sorrow for sin. When our Lord said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her, they which heard it were convicted by their own conscience, and went out one by one." (John viii. 7, 9.) Yet they did not become believers in Iesus. When Peter and the apostles declared before the council, "Ye slew Jesus. . . . Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour," "the elders were cut to the heart;" but the only result was a purpose to slay them. (Acts. v. 30-33.) They could not deny the power of Jesus' name, but they had no wish to obey Him. We may be able "by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus i. 9); but unless their consciences are softened they will remain gainsayers still. Conviction does not always end in conversion; it is sometimes "the sorrow of the world, which worketh death." How much more abiding was the work of the Holy Ghost on the three thousand who listened to St. Peter on the day of Pentecost! They were not "cut to the heart," but "pricked in the heart," and cried, in real distress and anxiety, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and, after listening to further counsel, they gladly received his word, and were baptized. The result was great joy and peace, and they were all filled with the Spirit.

Are any then bowed down with a sense of their sin? You shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. The might of this work of God is beautifully described by Bunyan in his Holy War, wherein he says: "Now Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction were both of them men of very great majesty; their faces were like the faces of lions, and their words like the roaring of the sea; and they still quartered in Mr. Conscience's house." And when Captain Conviction came upon Mansoul, "his ensign's name was Mr. Sorrow; he did bear the pale colours, and his escutcheon was the book of the law wide open, from whence issued a flame of fire."

Sometimes the Lord causes deep and long-continued distress on account of sin. It was so with Bunyan himself. God's Spirit worked with him in his childhood, but he resisted His strivings. But when he was seriously alarmed about himself, he thought the day of grace was past for him. "Now," he says, "I was in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might be so. Wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my sad condition for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I have done, still crying out, 'O that I had turned sooner! O that I had turned seven years ago!"

For a long time he remained under convictions and in temptations, till at last the darkness was cleared away, and he saw that "Christ was made unto him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." (I Cor. i. 30.)

To take a case nearer the present day. When conviction seized on Robert Annan, "he went to a hayloft, where, during the night and all next day, for the space of thirteen hours, he lay on his face before God, and with agonizing cries pleaded for mercy. Light and darkness were in conflict; grace and sin were striving for the mastery. For three days the conflict went on, his darkness the while deepening, his anguish growing more keen, and his burden more intolerable as he lay bemoaning himself, and crying with a piteous voice for help. In company with Mr. Campbell (says Mr. Macpherson) I went to see him. and found him in a darkened room, alone and upon his knees, panting and pleading for mercy like one who had not five minutes to live. Like many an awakened sinner, he was evidently seeking peace with God by trying to pray himself into a better state of heart instead of looking out to Jesus as the Lord our Righteousness. 'Robert,' said we to him, 'you are looking for a sign from heaven. You think if you heard a voice assuring you of salvation, or felt some strange thing within you, you would then believe and rest on Jesus. God gives you His word; why will you not rest on that? The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Believe, and it will be the power of God

unto salvation unto you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Jesus says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

"At the end of three days he was enabled to lay hold on that word of Jesus, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' There he cast anchor. He was safe on the Rock."*

Both John Bunyan and Robert Annan had wandered far from God. And both had a mighty work to do for their Master. So there was a needs be that they should be prepared by going through a great conflict. Yet, had they looked away from self to Christ, they would have obtained peace and holiness long before. The depth of their convictions was the work of the Holy Ghost. The length of their temptations was the work of the devil. There is no need that you should agonize for days and weeks. You may have joy as soon as the Jerusalem sinners received it, by a believing look at "that same Jesus whom you have crucified."

To others the Spirit comes like the gentle dew. There are no terrible throes. The heart opens at once to His benign influence. It was so with Mary Lyon, the founder of high spiritual and intellectual training for women in America. "She had been listening one beautiful Sabbath afternoon to a simple yet earnest declaration of the character of God from the lips of the silver-haired pastor, her great-uncle, who concluded his address, with deep solemnity, in these words: 'Remember, my friends, it is a fearful

^{*} The Christian Hero.

thing, and a very wicked thing too, not to love such a God as I have told you about to-day.' Mary's soul was touched. She remembered her mother's prayers, and her dying father's blessing. Her resolution was taken. Why should I not be blessed of my parents' God? was her inquiry. 'O God, Thy ways are perfect; be Thou my Father and the Guide of my youth, my everlasting portion.' From that hour the ruling passion of her heart was to spread the Saviour's glory. 'I longed to lay all the kingdoms of the world,' she says, 'at the feet of Him who had redeemed me.'"

One of Mary Lyon's most distinguished pupils, Fidelia Fiske, the friend of Persian women, went through a similar experience in her childhood.

"When she was thirteen years old her Sabbathschool teacher addressed her class on the importance of personal religion. The words sank deeply into one young heart, and the burden of sin rested upon her night and day, though she said nothing to any one. Her mother, however, suspected the cause of her grief, and said tenderly to her, 'What is it, my child?' At this loving question the pent-up feelings overflowed, and the reply came, 'Mother, I am a lost sinner.' She was pointed to the Saviour of sinners; and, laying down her load at the foot of the cross, went on her way rejoicing." It is remarkable that both these consecrated women were in after life the instruments of deep religious revivals among those for whom they laboured, which they thankfully acknowledged to be eminently the work of the Holy

Spirit. In Miss Lyon's case her pupils had enjoyed all the advantages of religious teaching; and just before the revival the scripture exercises, especially those relating to the immediate presence of God upon the mercy-seat, were characterized by unusual solemnity. Her words seemed like a voice from heaven; and as she witnessed God's blessing on her efforts. she exclaimed, "How easy it is to work with the Holy Spirit!" Fidelia Fiske's labours were among Persian women, degraded and ignorant, and to human power incorrigible. Yet God's free Spirit bowed their hearts under a sense of sin, and the missionary had the joy of seeing Persian girls wrestling in prayer for their own salvation. The convicting Spirit was working mightily with them. After the return of the children, Miss Fiske wrote, "Our school is so changed that we can hardly realize it. We often pause to ask ourselves, 'Is it possible that those whose voices we now hear in prayer and praise from morn to night are the same individuals over whom we mourned three months since as dead in trespasses and sins?' What has the Lord wrought!"

May the same mighty Spirit convince all who read these words of their own sinful and lost condition, and without delay lead them to the Saviour who yearns to welcome them.





CHAPTER II.

The Spirit's Testimony.

"He shall testify of Me."—John xv. 26.
"He will convince the world of righteousness."—John xvi. 8.

HE Holy Spirit has not to speak of Himself, but to testify of Christ. God knows our weakness, and therefore He only occupies us with one thought at a time. Christ is "the one name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." We have not to perplex our minds about repentance or faith, but fix our eyes on Christ alone. The less an inquirer looks at himself or his feelings the better. Nor can he understand the Holy Spirit, God's second gift, until he has accepted Christ, God's first gift. "Upon one stone shall be seven eyes." (Zech. iii. 9.) This is the Holy Spirit acting on sinners, transforming them into believers, and drawing them to look to Christ alone. It is needful to repent; but turning to Christ is repentance. It is necessary to believe: but accepting Christ is believing. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ only. On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared for a short season; but when the cloud was overpast, and the terror had ceased, the disciples "lifted up their eyes, and saw no man, save JESUS ONLY." (Matt. xvii. 8.) So the law and the prophets must cease; you must be shut up unto faith; you must see Jesus only. Then it is that you not only see Jesus, but see your sins laid upon Him. You see Him as the Lamb of God bearing away your sins.

So the second part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to convince the world of righteousness, to convince sinners that Christ's righteousness is provided to cover them from the justice of an offended God. Here again there is a force in the word convince. To take a familiar illustration, hardly any one now needs to be convinced of the distracted condition of Ireland. All are aware that the country is in confusion, and that in some districts there is no safety for life or property. What is wanted is, that some one should come forward with a panacea for the wants and woes of that unhappy country, and not only so, but that he should convince our statesmen of its infallible success. It would be useless for its purpose, unless it was accompanied by the power to convince those in authority that it was the only means of restoring peace in that island. In the same way you may be quite convinced of your own guilt and sinfulness, and may know that you lie under sentence of death, condemned by God's righteous law, yet you may not know for a certainty what is the only remedy for sin. You may be on the verge of despair, yet, never having been convinced that the righteousness of Christ would be reckoned to your account, you may never have appropriated it. Just here it is that the Holy Spirit interferes, and causes the things you have heard from your infancy to come home with power to your conscience and heart. He takes of the things of Jesus, and shews them unto you. He convinces you that the righteousness of Jesus is just suited to your need. In fact, He testifies of Christ, and this testimony is attended by power. Notice:—

I. The divinity of the testimony.

II. The method of the testimony.

III. The subject-matter of the testimony.

IV. The sphere of the testimony.

· I. Let us notice how entirely the testimony of the Holy Spirit is Divine. In I John v. 6 we read, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." And in verse of this witness of the Spirit is twice called "the witness of God." The whole Trinity are evidently referred to in verses 7, 8, even if we leave out the words frequently bracketed, and read with the Revised Version, "For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood: and the three agree in one." All their witness is Divine. First, because they all "agree in one," and they would not agree in one if one were Divine and the others human, or partly Divine and partly human. They could not agree in one, unless all three had one aim, one purpose, and one nature. Secondly, in the Greek we have the masculine plural twice, which can only be translated, "For there are three Persons who

bear witness, the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood: and the three Persons are into the One," or, as Bishop Wordsworth translates, "are (joined) into the One." It might be rendered, "are into the unity." We are sure therefore that all the Three Persons in the Trinity are described by these terms, "the Spirit, and the Water, and the Blood." The testimony of all is identical, and the united testimony of all is called, in verse 9, "the witness of God." Inanimate creatures cannot bear "the witness of God," A variety of arguments therefore prove conclusively that this chapter, in its most modified form, is most instructive regarding the Trinity. We have here, first, the testifying work of the Holy Ghost in the expression, "The Spirit." Secondly, the regenerating power of God the Father in the term, "The Water." Thirdly, the atoning efficacy of the death of God the Son in the words, "The Blood,"

The order here is not the historical order of conversion, but the way in which the action of the Divine Persons is experimentally realized by the soul. The sinner is first conscious of the witness of the Spirit, who testifies in his soul convincingly of spiritual truth, fastening a sense of sin on his heart, and then infusing a persuasion of Christ's righteousness. For though the Father and the Son bear witness, it is through the Spirit that their testimony is received. He makes an entrance for it. Thus the soul is led to experience the regenerative power of the Father, who "of His own will begat us with the Word of truth" (James i. 18), and to apprehend the blessings secured

for the believer by the shedding of the blood of God's dear Son, whereby he is "accepted in the Beloved."

Moreover, the things which have to do with salvation are called, in Romans viii. 5, "the things of the Spirit." But in John xvi. 14, 15 these things are said to be the things of the Father and the Son, and yet the Spirit is described as the Divine Agent who reveals them. "He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thus all three Persons are united. The testimony of all is identical in origin, equal in value, and one in operation.

As then this testimony is divine, it is at the peril of your soul's salvation that you resist or reject it. Oh, how terrible to grieve or tempt the Holy Spirit! How awful to quench His strivings for ever! How much hangs on the way in which you listen to this voice from heaven! It is most dangerous to think lightly of this testimony, or even to postpone obeying it. Your eternity depends on your *instant compliance* with the whisperings of this heavenly Monitor.

II. What is the method the Holy Spirit adopts? His testimony is addressed to the heart, the conscience, and the intellect. It is an inviting, convincing, and instructive testimony.

1. An inviting testimony, and as such addressed to the heart. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." (Rev. xxii. 17.) If the Spirit were not a Person, how could He invite? We can clearly gather from the subsequent part of the verse that the invitation is not

addressed to our Lord. Else why should we read, "And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come"? "He that is athirst" and "whosoever will" are expressly invited. All through that blessed Word which He inspired the testimony has been the same. The Holy Spirit has ever been pointing men to "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Even from the gate of Eden He cried, "Come, the tree of life is kept for those that believe." The prophets, on whom the Holy Spirit rested, continually re-echoed the invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." (Isa. lv. 1; Prov. viii. 4.) Through Old and New Testaments the invitation runs, pleading, beseeching, entreating men to be reconciled to God. "Turn ye; why will ye die?" Although the Holy Ghost speaks in all the thunders of Mount Sinai in order to convince of sin, at the same time His testimony is full of compassion and tenderness when He desires to lead the awakened to Calvary.

Not only is this testimony addressed to those who are without, but to such as have already found Christ precious. Who but the heavenly Bridegroom can say to His Bride, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon"? (Song Sol. iv. 8.) And who but the Spirit within the betrothed one can cry, "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices"? (Song Sol. viii. 14.) It is this method that is described by the Lord through Hosea: "Therefore, behold, I

will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." (ii. 14.)

As the testimony of the prophets was full of love and entreaty, so was this eminently characteristic of Him who was the greatest of the prophets, who, according to Psalm xlv. 7, was "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows;" and, according to Luke iv. I, was "full of the Holy Ghost." His own touching words to His disciples are, "Come and see;" "Come ye after me." To the masses, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It is His voice that exclaims to some, in sorrowful accents, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." It is He who will say hereafter to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." The same witness is given by the apostles, to whom the Lord, "by the Holy Ghost, had given commandments" (Acts i. 2), and who were themselves filled with the Holy Ghost. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) "To whom coming . . . ye also are built up." (I Peter ii. 4.) "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." (I John iv. 10.) Have you who read felt the attractive power of this witness, and been melted thereby?

2. It is also a *convincing* testimony, and as such is addressed to the conscience. You might suppose that the instructive process preceded conviction; but

it is not so. Why is it that so many persons come to the house of God every Sunday, and hear His word read and preached, yet do not understand the message? Why is it that so many open their Bibles day after day, and yet obtain no profit? Because their consciences have not been touched. They have never been convicted of sin, nor are they persuaded that Christ's righteousness is the only foundation on which they can rest, and so they are not able to receive what they hear out of God's word. Therefore conviction must precede instruction. This is the very essence and marrow of our subject, that the Holy Spirit not only testifies, but convinces. He touches and then satisfies the conscience. He intensifies the need, and then fills the heart. It is this part of His method which, according to Heb. x. 1, 2, makes the worshipper perfect. When he has felt the Spirit's teaching regarding the justifying blood of Jesus, it is written of him, "No more conscience of sins." And when he once discovers that he needs Christ, and that nothing else but Christ will satisfy him, he accepts Him immediately.

3. It is also an *instructive* testimony, and as such is addressed to the intellect.

We have abundant proof of this in the epistle to the Hebrews, a treatise admirably suited for these days of unbelief and self-will. How often we meet with such expressions as, "The Holy Ghost this signifying" (ix. 8); and, "The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." (x. 15.) We gather from them that the Holy Spirit is not merely the Inspirer, but the Interpreter of Scripture. He teaches us the meaning of the tabernacle, and shews us that it typifies the imperfect condition of believers under the law, and also shadows forth the greater and more perfect tabernacle, through which Christ passed into the immediate presence of God. He teaches us the nature of the new covenant, and reveals to us all the blessings made over to us by its provisions. makes all the types of the old law to glow with living light, and unfolds to us all the dark sayings the prophets uttered. It is He who dwells in the House Beautiful, and knows the hidden art of the old masters. It is He who can unlock the secrets of the future; for He has the key of David. He can tell the sorrows that are coming upon the wicked, and the deliverance which will be wrought out for the people of God. Indeed, "He will guide us into all the truth." (John xvi. 13.) There is nothing in the fulness of God, which is intended as the believer's portion, which He will not reveal. If I come to Him, He will bring me into the light, and I shall know what I ought to do.

III. What is the subject-matter of the Holy Spirit's testimony? In one word, it is Christ. "He shall testify of Me;" "He shall glorify Me." The Holy Spirit, so to speak, takes a burning-glass and concentrates all the rays of light on Christ. So it will be in the New Jerusalem. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 23.) Every inhabitant

of heaven has his eyes directed to the Lamb, and every whit of the temple utters His glory. (Ps. xxix. 9, margin.) The living ones give glory to Him that sitteth on the throne (Rev. iv. 9); the four and twenty elders say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory." (Rev. iv. 11.) An innumerable company of angels say with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory." Every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, conspire to cry, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 11-13.) Christ has all the honour of His people's salvation throughout eternity, and they "hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house"

So now the Spirit directs every seeking soul to Christ alone. He will not suffer you to look at anything in yourselves, neither at your sinfulness and guilt on the one hand, nor at your supposed goodness on the other, but at Jesus only. He first intensifies your need, and then He lifts on a banner a crucified Christ, wounded for you. The Holy Spirit convinces, reveals, testifies of Christ and His righteousness.

That righteousness is shown in

I. The perfect justification of the sinner. Man argues, Why must the Son of God die? The Spirit convinces the inquirer that God's righteous law was at stake, and that Christ tasted the bitterness of eternal death in order that the sinner might be ac-

quitted; also that He rose to the highest place in heaven that the sinner might be justified.

The awakened sinner is filled with doubt and tormenting fear; he is racked with uncertainty. But when he appropriates Christ's one offering for sin, he finds that he is "perfect for ever." He is clothed with a perfect righteousness. Thus the Spirit of God shows the lost sinner that the very righteousness he needs has been provided for him, that it exactly fits his case, and that the righteousness is absolutely his own. Now the Spirit must take away everything else before he can establish this. Mark the words in Heb. x. 9: "He taketh away the first [covenant] that he may establish the second." Let Him take away from you all your works and all your resolutions; for they are part of the first covenant which failed to save. Until they are broken in pieces the new covenant will never be established for you. What you need is not to be satisfied with Christ's moral perfection and spiritual beauty, but to know that this goodness and beauty are yours. David prayed, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us," and it came to pass. The moment a sinner believes he is pronounced by God as righteous as Christ Himself; he is accepted in the Beloved. Thank God that some of you who read these words have been freed from the burden of sin, and continually rejoice in Christ Tesus.

2. In the successful intercession of our High Priest on His people's behalf.

The Holy Ghost shewed the children of Israel, by

the closed Holy of holies, by the darkened veil, and by the flame which leaped forth from behind it to consume the thoughtless and unholy, that the way into the presence of God was not then made manifest. But now the same Spirit takes the believing soul right into the Holiest of all, pointing out that our High Priest has rent the veil, and entered in, and left a new and living way open for us. So we have boldness to approach the Father. Is Christ my High Priest? I too am made a priest unto God, and I follow in the great procession of anointed ones, clothed in white raiment, who swing their censers of acceptable prayer and praise, sprinkled with the blood of Him who led the way. The precious truth is taught me in the epistle to the Ephesians that I died with Christ, that I was quickened together with Him, and am already seated with Him in heavenly places. There, too, I am assured that "through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 18.) These truths can never be applied or appropriated except by the Holy Ghost. He shews me that Christ is my righteous Advocate with the Father, and that His very presence in heaven on my behalf pleads victoriously for me. He sits on the right hand of God, pleading the virtue of His own blood; and His name is Faithful and True. Nor will He hold His peace until the righteousness of His people go forth as brightness, and their salvation as a lamp burneth.

3. In the sway of the King who claims our obedience.

His people know that His is a righteous rule, and they gladly obey Him. The Spirit convinces them that the sceptre of His kingdom is a right sceptre, and so they keep nothing back from Him. It is not enough for us to know that Christ is a King who commands the hosts of heaven; He must reign in each believer's heart. They are many who profess to be His people, who say now, "We will not have this man to reign over us." And there are those who have accepted Him as their Saviour, but in whose hearts and lives He does not reign alone. How happy are they when they are taught to say, "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." (Isa. xxvi. 13.) It is not sufficient to say, "Thou art the King." Can you say, "Thou art my King, O God"? How great is the progress of Christ's power when we reach the New Testament! Even the Psalmist who said, "Thou art my King, O God," was forced to add, "Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy." How different is the condition of the Church of Christ after Pentecost! Now that the Spirit has been poured forth, "the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. We war. casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) All we have to do now is to receive the fulness of the Spirit, and then we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." We must recollect and use the grace so richly provided us; for if we fail it will be because we have not availed ourselves of this ample provision.

Thus is Christ Head over all things to His Church, which he fills and governs by His Spirit, making His body the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 22, 23.) The Spirit convinces those who yield themselves unto God, that every one of Christ's claims is just, and that He never asks us for the surrender of anything unless He knows that our compliance will work out our true happiness. God's people need to be convinced that Christ's rule is absolutely perfect, and that He makes no mistakes. Suffer Him to assure you on all these points.

IV. What is the sphere of the Spirit's testimony?

In the case of professors He is without, not within. the soul. He strives with men as He did with sinners before the flood. How startling a revelation is this in the case of the Church at Laodicea! Christ ought to have been long since on the throne of the heart of those who seemed to be expecting the Bridegroom: but He is without in the cold. Else why that passionate entreaty, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock"? How clearly does this prove that God has not sent forth the Spirit of His Son into the heart of every baptized person; for the Laodiceans had been baptized. Moreover, wherever Christ dwells and reigns, there is peace, purity, and deliverance. But these are by no means to be found in the hearts of all the baptized. How careful should we be to distinguish between truth and error!

"We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"

alone. (Gal. iii. 14.) Then how great the change! The house is no longer empty. There is now a reality and force about the apostle's exclamation, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" (I Cor. vi. 19.) The sphere of the testimony is altered now. Before it was a voice in the desert, echoing along silent chambers, but awaking no clear response. Now it proceeds from the warmth of a human heart, and is united with all the certainty of personal persuasion. When the fellowship is close, you can hardly tell the difference between the voice of the Spirit and the voice of the saint; for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. vi. 17.) May the communion be so entire in our case that the conflict of our will with His may be immediately subdued. When we hear His voice may we let Him speak through us, and say, "It is the Lord." And when He moves, may we yield our members as instruments of righteousness in His bands.





CHAPTER III.

The Spirit Possessed by all Beliebers.

"Ye have received the Spirit."—Rom. viii. 15.

T is very important for us who are believers to know whether we are really in possession of the Holy Spirit. For if so, we should not pray for the Spirit as though we had never received the gift, but should rather praise God for what is already ours.

St. Paul clearly answers this question when he writes to the Christians at Rome, "Ye have received the Spirit;" and when he tells the Corinthians, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii. 16.)

What then is a believer's duty in reference to prayer for the Spirit? And what ought a sinner to do?

In order to answer these questions we are led to examine the nature of the Holy Spirit's influence in Old Testament times. Do we ask, "Had the saints and patriarchs of the Old Testament the Spirit?" I reply, Undoubtedly they had. Else why does

David pray, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me"? (Psalm li. 11.) Three times He is mentioned in Isa. lxiii. In verse 10 it is said of all the children of Israel in the wilderness, "They rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit." In verse II reference is made to Moses as the shepherd of the flock, and the question is asked, "Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him?" And again, in verse 14, we read of the "Spirit of the Lord." In an eminent degree did His inspiration characterize those who wrote God's word. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i. 21.) In another passage St. Peter terms the Spirit who inspired the prophets to be none other than "the Spirit of Christ, which was in them." (I Peter i. II.)

In Num. xi. 25 we are told that "the Lord took of the spirit which was upon Moses, and gave it [or Him] unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease."

To come to New Testament times. Before our Lord's ministry began, and throughout its course, was the Spirit present? Yes; for Elizabeth "was filled with the Holy Ghost" (Luke i. 41); and it is remarkable that the first person described in the Bible as filled with the Holy Ghost was a woman. The second was Zacharias (Luke i. 67), who, under His influence, composed his triumphant song. No wonder their child, John the Baptist, was, from the moment of his birth, "filled with the Holy Ghost." So too "the

Holy Ghost was upon Simeon," and he had special revelations and leadings from the same Spirit. (Luke ii. 25-27.)

How did the disciples obtain a knowledge of our Lord during His ministry? How was Peter led to make his noble confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"? (Matt. xvi. 16.) We know it was by Divine power; for the Saviour Himself added, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Then by what agency did God reveal it? We have the answer in I Cor. xii. 3: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." As it is always through the blood of Christ that God pardons, so it is always by the Holy Ghost that God teaches and enlightens.

What then is the meaning of the passage in John vii. 39, "The Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified"? Not merely that He would be an indwelling Spirit, convicting of sin with greater pungency, reigning in all believers, constraining them with greater fulness of love, and teaching them with more ripeness of knowledge than before, but that there would be a newness and variety about the gift as proceeding from the glorified Saviour. We may compare the revelation of the Spirit before Pentecost with the manifestation of Christ before His incarnation. Christ had not spoken in secret from the beginning; He walked with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day; He spoke to Moses out of the burning bush; He appeared to Joshua as Captain of the host of the Lord; and when

the fulness of time was come He was sent into the world. In like manner Christ says to His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." (John xiv. 16.) As an abiding Comforter, He was a new gift to the Church. So John xv. 26: "The Comforter whom I will send unto you from the Father." As Christ, who had appeared before, was in due time the Apostle or the sent One of the Father, so the Holy Spirit, who had worked before, was sent by the Father and the Son after the ascension of the Lord. Both these promises were seen afar off by Old Testament saints. They were brought to light by the gospel. The atoning work of Christ was dimly discerned before His appearance in the world, and the agency of the Holy Spirit was very feebly recognized. Both were behind a cloud. This has now cleared away, and we see the sun walking in brightness. There is the closest possible link between the gift of the Holy Ghost to New Testament Christians and the glorification of the Lord. He was to testify of Christ, and He could not do this fully until the Saviour's atoning work had been accepted and sealed of God.

What then is the position of believers now? They are all born of the Spirit, as our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) All who truly believe are born of water; that is, of the Word. (James i. 18.) They are also born of the

Spirit, because He applies the Word to the conscience. If you have entered into the kingdom of God you are born of the Spirit. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption." This was true of all the saints at Rome (Rom. i. 7), and it is true of all saints now. So Rom. v. 5: "The Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Indeed this is the test. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.) This was the testimony of St. Peter and the other apostles as they stood before the council: "The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him." (Acts v. 32.) Again St. Paul says, in 1 Cor. ii. 12, "Now we have received the Spirit which is of God." So in chap. xii. 7, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man [i.e. to every believer] to profit withal." The Christians at Corinth had made very little progress in grace or holiness, yet the apostle addresses them all as having received the Spirit. There are believers in whom the Holy Spirit has not free course; they oppose barriers to His complete work, and yet He is there. St. Paul was in great distress about the Galatians, and yet he insinuates no doubt as to whether they possessed this great gift. His question was, "This only would I. learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2.) It was certain that they had "begun in the Spirit," though they were seeking to be made perfect by the flesh. Indeed, it is in this epistle that we find the cardinal passage on the subject: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into

your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Chap. iv. 6.) From John i. 12 we know that it is by receiving Christ we become sons of God; and by this passage we are assured, that because we are sons of God we have received the Spirit. Simple as this is, all do not realize it. Ask yourself, "Have I received Christ?" Then I am a child of God. "Am I a child of God?" Then God's Spirit dwells in me.

What then were the Galatians told to do? to seek some new gift? No; but to walk in the Spirit. (v. 16.) They were to use the power they already possessed; they would find the use of this gift sufficient to enable them to conquer all the fleshly principles by which they had been beguiled, whether they savoured of the spirit of bondage or the spirit of unholiness; for St. Paul emphatically pronounces, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

Very similar is the teaching of the epistle to the Ephesians: "In whom also" (he could say of them all) "after that ye believed [or rather, when ye believed], ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance." (i. 13, 14.) Nor had this passed away; they were still being "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (ii. 22.) What is the subject of chap. iv.? "God gave gifts unto men." Therefore "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." What then was their duty? We have it in chap. v. 18: "Be filled with the Spirit." All Christians have the Spirit,

but all are not filled thereby. The Lord has made an ample provision for His people. It is their duty to receive it in its entirety. "All spiritual blessings in Christ" are ours. Why do we delay to let the full flood of grace stream in? If Peter, and John, and Stephen, and Barnabas, and Paul, and the whole Church at Jerusalem, were full of the Holy Ghost, why are not we? "God gave them the like gift as He did unto us." (Acts xi. 17.) The only hindrance can be because we do not receive the Word with all readiness of mind. We compare ourselves among ourselves; we look at the low standard of grace and holiness which is too common among Christians, and not at Divine possibilities and Divine promises; we look within at the muddy stream of folly, and sin, and natural wisdom, which proceeds from the carnal heart, imperfectly renewed, and not at the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal," which is ever "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb;" we look to doubts, and feelings, and drawbacks, instead of the unchangeable word of an unchangeable God. Oh if we would drink in this truth, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God!" Is this for me? Then why do I hesitate to take it? Because I do not see it around me. But I have to walk by faith, not by sight. I have to believe, and then I shall see.

Then He is called the Spirit of adoption, because there is a wondrous link between Christ and Him who is emphatically called "the Spirit of God's Son." As Mr. Graham has truly said, "The fulness of God, the fulness of the Spirit, and the fulness of Christ are one. The Father is the Fountain of grace; and all that fulness of grace dwells in the Son, who of God is made unto us sanctification. By His Spirit Christ dwells in us, imparts to us the divine nature, and changes us into the divine image."* It is because He is the Spirit of God's Son that He teaches me to say, "Abba, Father." So the Bishop of Bloemfontein writes: "If the Spirit comes to us as Light, Christ is the Sun in whom that Light is gathered up before it comes to us. The Light in the Revelation is bloodred; it passes through Christ, dwelling first in Him, given to Him without measure, and coming through Him to us to give us grace for grace, and to change us from glory to glory."†

What then must be a believer's prayer in reference to the Spirit? We are taught this in Eph. iii. 16. That he may be "strengthened with might by God's Spirit in the inner man." Thus will he be "filled with all the fulness of God." For this we ought to ask and intercede, and as we ask we should receive. For as all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, as soon as we ask in faith we shall receive. God does not put it into His people's hearts to ask what He does not mean to give. Let your cry be, "Fill me with the Holy Ghost," and it will be done. Only do not let your prayers give the impression that you have never received the Spirit. Let them be modelled on our Scriptural Collect for Whitsunday. "Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment

^{*} Work of the Holy Spirit in Sanctification, p. 28.

⁺ Presence and Office of the Holy Spirit, p. 40.

in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort." Thank God for what you have already received, and "whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule." (Phil. iii. i6.) Thus shall you be filled with the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

II. But there are those who know nothing as yet of spiritual things, who have hitherto no part in Christ, and no share in His Spirit, who are still outside the covenant. Yet such a soul is sometimes awakened to feel his need. What is he to do? Is he to pray for the Spirit? Yes; but he has a still more urgent and immediate duty, and that is, to accept Christ as his Saviour. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Son." Have I accepted this gift? If not, how dare I ask for another!

What was the essence of the greatest gospel sermon ever preached, that delivered by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost? "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." Although he explained the outpouring of the Spirit, did he tell his audience to pray for Him? No; the message was, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) As soon as Jesus is received the Spirit enters. Indeed, He previously prepares the way by opening the heart, and when the moment of decision is reached He takes and occupies the throne. So again, in Peter's second sermon, the chief truth he dwells upon is this: "The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ve denied." Thousands more of Jerusalem sinners

receive the message, and they too are endued with the Spirit.

If you have an earnest desire for pardon and peace, should you not accept these blessings at once? Every good and perfect gift *cometh down* from above, and as you see it coming you should stretch out your hands to receive it. Then you will immediately be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Just as the water flowed from the smitten rock, so is it now. Whenever the sinner sees Christ to be wounded for his sins, a fresh stream of living water issues from Calvary for him, and he is refreshed and enlightened thereby. And this gift proceeds not merely from the dying Christ, but from the risen and ascended Lord. It was when Jesus was raised from the dead that He "breathed on His disciples, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John xx. 22.) What words are these, "Receive ye"! and why do we not receive? Are not the Lord's words accompanied by power?

Still it may be urged, Should not the inquiring sinner ask for the Spirit? Yes, he may; for as such are led to pray for pardon to prove their earnestness, so may they pray for the Spirit. Such have often been encouraged by the Saviour's words in Luke xi. 13: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask IIim?" Now this promise was eminently suited to the transition period when the Holy Ghost was not yet given. And it is suitable for those who are in the twilight now, feeling their way out of the darkness

into the light. None who plead a single promise of the Lord will ever be disappointed. We are quite sure that the late Mr. Dallas was greatly blessed when he taught this little prayer to many who were ignorant of God: "O God, for Christ's sake, give me the Holy Spirit." Such a prayer cannot be offered up in real sincerity without being followed by spiritual awakening; and such records of blessing abound. Only let us remember the spirit in which we must ask. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." The earthly father gives his child bread as soon as he asks for it, and our heavenly Father will grant His gift quite as quickly. It is His readiness to bestow this gift that is intimated by our Lord in His conversation with the woman of Sychar. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." (John iv. 10.) Those who came to Christ to be healed were cured in the selfsame hour. So will it be with spiritual healing. "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

Moreover, there are cases where there is great ignorance and hardness of heart, where there is no conviction of sin, and no sight of Christ. In dealing with such, a prayer for the Spirit is the only means to open the heart, and if they can be induced to offer it up the nature is softened, the obstacles are removed, and he who once was hard as a nether millstone is made willing to receive the Saviour.

Oh, may the Holy Ghost take of the things of Jesus, and shew them unto us!



CHAPTER IV.

Life, the Spirit's First Gift.

"The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."-Rom. viii. 2.

ORE than fifty years ago three sisters, the elder ones of a large family, lived in the world, and for the world. They delighted in the pleasures which pass away. They had no spiritual life. This was the subject of deep distress to a pious governess in the family of some of their very near relations. As she was spiritually enlightened, she desired to bring all she knew under the same Divine influence. So she lent to the elder sister a sermon on the words in John iii. 5: "Ye must be born again," and requested her to read it attentively. The latter returned it with the remark, that she did not see anything very striking in it. "Do me the favour to read it again, Miss G-," urged the faithful friend. And when the sermon had been returned a second time, this singleminded Christian's faith did not waver, but she earnestly besought her young friend to read it once more. During this third perusal of Divine truth, the eyes of the reader were opened. God's Word became quick and powerful, and the result was, that she who had once been dead passed from death unto life. By the same agency her two sisters were born again shortly after, and all three became decided followers of the Lord Jesus. Nor was there any hesitation about their choice, as is so frequently the case with those who seem to be disciples. They were all convinced that a man cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of the Lord Jesus at the same time. There was no thought of compromise. They lost their taste for the dancing parties, and other worldly gaieties with which they had been much absorbed, and so it was impossible for them to continue their former life of worldliness. And notice, that this was not impressed upon them by the teaching of Christian ministers, but it was taught them by the enlightening of God's Holy Spirit. They had received the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and this was too precious a gift to be trifled away. And in process of time all difficulties were overcome. Others of their relations were added to the Lord, and they became the first-fruits of a rich spiritual harvest. gathered in out of the same family. And when I mention that the second of those sisters was my own mother, you may be sure that the events have made a deep impression on my mind. Short as her life was, the fragrance of her holiness, consistency, and prayerfulness has left an undying record on the memories of those who knew her.

Such incidents as these illustrate the nature, reality, and completeness of the new birth of the Spirit; and they show that life is the first of the seven chief gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are life, light, liberty, knowledge, power, fruitfulness, and holiness.

I. Why do people need life? Because they are dead. "What," you say, "that statesman, whose intellect is so massive, whose apprehension is so subtle, whose knowledge of character is so profound, who is so intimately acquainted with the undercurrents of thought and purpose, which are working all over the continent of Europe, is he dead? That young lady, so full of vivacity, so quick at repartce, is she dead? That man of science, who measures the planets, and weighs the stars, and forecasts the winds, is he dead?" Yes: if the Spirit of God has never breathed into them life from above, they are all dead. Theirs may be called a living death, and a walking death; but vet it is death. Such as are dead walk about, and read, and talk, and fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind; yet the Scripture verdict is that they are dead-"dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." (Eph. ii. 1, 2.) This exactly describes the condition of the congregation of the dead. They disobey God. Satan works in them, and moves them as He wills. They follow the course of this world, and have no thought for eternity.

Yet such men and women have a vague idea of

heaven as sure to follow the death of the body, and of the resurrection as ensuing in due time. They have no sense of sin, no knowledge that it has to be put away, no desire to be cleansed from its stain, nor delivered from its power, no longing to be with Christ. Indeed, it is this that shews their dangerous condition, that their existence may be summed up in two words, "Without Christ." (Eph. ii. 12.) Paul could say, "To me to live is Christ," and therefore he could add, "To die is gain." Most people in this professedly Christian land talk of heaven and happiness when their friends are taken from them, but not of Christ. Indeed, however religious they may be, they do not wish to hear of Christ at any time.

In Ezekiel xxxvii. the condition of such is described as worse than dead. Not only have they no life, but neither flesh, nor sinews; they are dry bones, bleached and bare. There seems no possibility that they will live again. And so when we look at those who will not hear of Christ, who hate His name, and flee from His call, who crucify Him by their whole lives, such verily seem to be past hope.

II. The question naturally arises, "Can the dead live?" Most certainly they can. All those who are now spiritually alive were once dead, senseless as the nether millstone. St. Paul, speaking of the dead, says of himself and of the saints at Ephesus, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." (Eph. ii. 3.) In the emphatic language of our Lord, such as believe "have passed

from death unto life." The dry bones can be clothed with flesh, and stand upon their feet.

I. How is this brought about? What is the agency? It can only be by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is for this reason that He is called "The Spirit of Life." From Him all life, natural or spiritual, is derived. It was He who at first breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Gen. ii. 7.) Elihu's testimony is, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me'life." (Job xxxiii. 4.) If this be the case with animal life, a thousand times more is it true of spiritual life. "The Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) No doubt this passage was in the minds of the compilers of the Nicene Creed, when they wrote, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life." All who are born again are born of the Spirit. The beginning, middle, and end of spiritual life are His. There may be a shaking among the dry bones under human prophesying, and by the same agency they may be clothed with flesh and sinews, but they can never breathe or move until the Spirit of God enters into them. As we look at the myriads of souls still in the death of heathenism. or superstition, or infidelity, we cry, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain. that they may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9.) And the death from which they need to be rescued is the more terrible because it ends in "the second death." It is hardening in its nature, and it tends to total alienation from the living God.

It is therefore the first and greatest blessing to be made alive. And those of you who have been quickened can testify that all that has been done in you was the work of the Holy Spirit. You can say, "He it was who breathed life into me at the first; He has sustained me ever since by new supplies of heavenly life. Since He entered my soul, I seem to have woke up to new heavens and a new earth. The very atmosphere is changed. And I am sure He will continue the work until it is perfected in the presence of my Father."

The Spirit of life is "in Christ Fesus," because there is a very close link between the Son and the Spirit, and because every blessing is stored up for us in Christ. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. i. 3.) As therefore our richest spiritual blessing is the Holy Spirit Himself, we are blessed with Him in Christ Jesus. The life that dwells in us is the very life that dwells in Christ; for we are quickened together with Christ. (Eph. ii. 5.) This is God's goodness towards those who are dead in sins. God loved them when they were dead, and quickened them when they had no power to give themselves life. Therefore none need despair, so unfathomable is God's mercy to those who have been fighting against Him. A multitude of texts prove that the life is in Christ Jesus. "In Him was life." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "Because I live, ye shall live also." "The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit." "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."* Not only is it true that the Spirit of life is in Christ Jesus, but Christ Himself comes and lives in the soul. The life continually proceeds from Christ, as typified by the "river of the water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. I.) All life is treasured up for us in Christ, but the Holy Spirit is the channel whereby the life flows to us.

The two blessings every believer possesses are clearly defined in Rom. v. 10: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." The two blessings are, "Reconciled by His death," "Saved by His life." The believer is not only quickened, but kept unto salvation by the very life which Christ possesses at the right hand of the Father. Truly is the Spirit called the Spirit of Christ. The life which Christ gives is as eternal as 'His own. "He that hath the Son hath life." (1 John v. 12.) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) If you are Christ's, you have not an intermittent life, that comes and goes, but one which will last for ever, And Christ and His Spirit are so entirely one, that he who has Christ has the Spirit.

2. The only instrumentality by which life can be given is the word of God. There is no other means whereby conscious souls can receive life. For we read, in James i. 18, "Of His own will begat He us with

^{*} John i. 4, x. 10, xiv. 19; 1 Cor. xv. 45; Gal. ii. 20.

the word of truth." And in 1 Peter i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." Life therefore cannot ordinarily be granted in infant baptism. It would be contrary to these passages, as well as to many more in God's word, to imagine it. We do not limit the power of God to save infants dying before they have the consciousness of sin, nor can we doubt the duty of believing parents to bring their children to be baptized; but, in the case of those who are old enough to understand, there must be a conscious intelligent acceptance of Christ before spiritual life can be imparted. In strict accordance with this we read, in John v. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Here it is expressly declared that the only way by which the dead can live is by hearing the voice of the Son of God, and how can they hear it except in His word? So John vi. 63, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you, they are spirit, and they are life." Christ saith, "My words are life," because they communicate life; and they are life because they are spirit; they are animated by the Divine Spirit Himself. Jesus could have meant none other; for He said just before, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." All these passages have to be considered before we can obtain a full grasp of our Lord's words to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,

he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John ii. 5.) We cannot explain this passage in such a way as to make it at variance with other portions of God's word. We have seen that the incorruptible seed is none other than the word of God. By hearing and believing this the dead live. Therefore being born of water must mean being born of God's word; and when we read that such must also be born of the Spirit, we are taught that unless the Spirit breathes upon the Word, and applies it to the conscience, it will have no quickening power. The close connection of water and the Word is also strikingly brought before us in Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word" (or with the Word, R.V). Just as quickening comes through the Word, so is it with cleansing. Water is here clearly identified with the word of God, for the washing is only to be had "with" or "in" it. We must also bear in mind that it is "the water" that witnesseth, in I John v. S, where there is an evident allusion to the regenerative power of God the Father. who "of His own will begat us with the word of truth." So when we compare all these passages together, the light we have gathered enables us to understand John iii. better, and we are thus convinced that as water cleanses the body, so the word of God cleanses the soul. For this reason water was chosen for the outward sign in baptism, because it embodies the ideas of quickening and purifying; and baptism, in the case of adults, should be simultaneous with the "confession which is made with the mouth unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) Confirmation, which is the completion of baptism in the case of infants, is exactly the same critical epoch, that of decision. We must, then, be born again by the "word of God, which is quick [or alive] and powerful." (Heb. iv. 12.)

3. Does any ask, "How am I to obtain life? I have often heard the message, but I am just as cold as ever." The only answer is, You must hear and believe. I have it on my Master's authority, confirmed by two "verilys," that if you do thus believe His word you will immediately have everlasting life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; [cometh not into judgment, R.V.] but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24.) So the blessing comes not by hoping, or praying, or feeling, but simply by believing. As soon as in childlike trust you believe in "Christ for me," death ceases, and life begins.

I was endeavouring to make these truths clear to a class of young people who were being prepared for confirmation, and I was examining them on John iii. 36 as if they had been a class of infants. "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "Who has everlasting life?" One replied, "He that believeth." "And what has he that believes?" "Everlasting life," was the answer. "When has he everlasting life?" was the third question. A young lady, who was a great sufferer, but was most evidently taught of God, overcoming her natural shyness at once gave

the beautiful and true answer, "The moment he believes." She has since learnt, not to walk by faith, but by sight, in the immediate presence of Him who gave Martha the promise, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" (John xi. 40.) The object of faith must be Christ Himself-Christ bearing our sins. Our Lord makes this clear to Nicodemus in opening up the subject of the new birth. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 15, 16.) Obtaining life is the same thing as being new-born. Now that life springs from faith in a crucified and exalted Saviour. He has been lifted up for you. Look and live. So if you are unsaved, you will not obtain life by looking for the Spirit, but by looking at Christ-dying for you, living for you. The Spirit exalts Him, testifies of Him, glorifies Him. However far you have wandered from grace, the moment you believe, "no condemnation" is written for you. When you see Christ lifted up for you there is no more death, nor peril, nor doubt, nor fear; you have stepped into life eternal.

If you are already accepted in the Beloved, life more abundantly is your portion. If you have a sickly life, and can barely cling to Christ for your own salvation, you will do little or nothing for the Master. Take an illustration of Spurgeon's in an address to workers. A railway contractor wants to hire labourers for a new undertaking. The next

morning he sees at his office a number of consumptive-looking, lantern-jawed men, whose faces tell of starvation, and their frames of penury. He shakes his head and says, "You will never do for my work. You are more fit for a hospital than to wheel a barrow; you must eat more beef before you can be fit to be employed by me." The following day he is confronted by a gang of stalwart, powerful fellows, whose muscles stand out like whipcord. The ruddy glow of health is in their faces, and their frames have been developed by constant exercise. "You are the men I want!" he exclaims at a glance. They set to work, and by noon a mountain has disappeared. So the men who are qualified to work in the Lord's vineyard must be full of life. They must have enough and to spare. No others are qualified to go forth when the host shouteth for the battle. We have the description of such in John vii. 38: "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Strong believers are like an overflowing fountain. If you do not overflow with life you cannot be used by the Master; but when there is the fulness of life it must communicate itself. Believers, live like Duncan Matheson, labouring in season and out of season to win souls. Be, like Henry Havelock, noble examples, that, whatever your calling may be, you can be soldiers of your heavenly Captain, faithful unto death, and yours will be the crown of life.



CHAPTER V.

Light, the Spirit's Second, Gift.

"There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."—Rev. iv. 5.

HE doctrine of baptisms is very little understood in the Church of Christ in the present day. Great stress has been laid upon the baptism of water; but we hear very little about the baptism of fire. But the baptism of fire is several times mentioned in the word of God, and is described as higher in its quality and deeper in its effects than the baptism of water. Water cleanses the outward surface of the body, and so it is typical of the work of the Holy Spirit in purifying the outward man; namely, his acts and words. Such a baptism was eminently suitable to John the Baptist, when he bade the Pharisees and Sadducees to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and told them to reform their lives. But he distinctly pointed out that a fuller baptism was near at hand. "I baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than

I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. iii. 11, 12.) Fire portrays the animal heat, which is the principle at once of light and life, and so it represents to us that complete change of the whole inner nature, without which every alteration of the outward acts is valueless in the sight of God. Water purifies the flesh, but fire enlightens and vivifies the heart. The baptism of fire is therefore specially described in God's word as the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of water may be identical therewith; the baptism of fire must be. When water has been applied to the natural body, its effect soon passes away. The man who rises out of the river where he has been bathing soon comes in contact again with earthy particles; but if he is filled with inward heat, he is continually impelled onward; he is constrained by the principle within. So the baptism of water may have no abiding effects. The baptism of fire thoroughly purges the floor, completely renews the whole character. Indeed, according to the passage quoted from St. Matthew, the fire has a twofold effect. It thoroughly purifies the believer; but it burns up the ungodly, who are compared to chaff, and it cannot be quenched. The contrast between the two baptisms is also brought out in John i. 33. "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Christ was full of the Holy Ghost when He commenced His ministry, and He was the channel by which the same gift was communicated to His disciples. This *abiding* nature of the Spirit is beautifully illustrated by the cloven tongues like as of fire, which appeared at Pentecost, and we read, it *sat* upon each of them. "As Christ is, so are we in this world," and the same Spirit which abode upon Him continues to work in those who have received Him.

Nor must we overlook the fact that at this critical period in the history of the Church of Christ fire was the chosen symbol to embody the descent of the Divine Spirit. The Master had promised His disciples before He left them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.) And when this came to pass it was verily a baptism of fire. The love, the power, the utterance, which characterized these early Christians, were all fiery in their nature. And, as they were representatives of the whole Church, all that they received was ours.

The same truth shines forth from the Revelation. The seven Spirits of God which St. John saw typified under seven burning lamps of fire denote the Spirit of God in His sevenfold energy and perfection. When we read, in Rev. i. 4, "Grace be unto you, and peace . . . from the seven Spirits which are before His throne," we know it must be a figure of speech for the One Spirit, because the benediction comes from the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. He is sevenfold in His manner of working, and whatever is

in Himself He communicates to His people. though there are diversities of gifts, they all proceed from the same Spirit. (1 Cor. xii.) The Holy Spirit is here compared to burning fire, and why? Because He comes to give light to God's people. The fire was seen in lamps, therefore it was intended to enlighten. And if any of these gifts of the Holy Ghost resemble the names of our blessed Lord, we must remember it is the office of the Spirit to communicate the things of Christ to His believing people. Moreover, there is a difference between light in Christ and light in you. The light in Christ is imparted to a believer by the Holy Spirit. Then it is possessed by him; it dwells in him, and it radiates forth from him to others. Light therefore is the second great gift of the Spirit, and wherever it enters it completely changes the whole man.

We may regard light under the emblem of fire in four aspects. Light reveals, burns, gladdens, fructifies.

I. Light reveals. This is eminently the case with the Word which the Spirit inspired. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light." (Ps. cxix. 130.) "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (v. 105.) Notice this expression, "The entrance of thy words giveth light." When the Old and New Testaments are read in God's house the veil of unbelief is upon many hearts, and so the Word cannot enter. You have often heard the word of God. Has it entered your heart? When the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto you, then your whole soul will be filled with light; for the entrance

of God's word only takes place when the Spirit, who inspired it, applies it to the conscience. This is the kernel of the whole matter, the power of the Spirit to enlighten. Thus we have not merely light radiating from Christ, but light appropriated by you. The Spirit alone can take away the veil of unbelief, as we see from 2 Cor. iii. 18: "But we all, with open face [unveiled face, R.V.] beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Then, and not till then, will you behold and reflect the glory of the Lord. When there is no veil between you cannot help seeing the glory and being changed thereby. How is it with you? Can you see the glory? If not, the Spirit is willing to take away the veil from your hearts, and tear it to atoms. And when not a single fragment of the veil is left the light will stream in, so that your whole body will be full of light, and you shall shine with the brightness of His glory. This is God's definite purpose and aim for His believing people.

But some are still in a darkness that may be felt, either sitting down in darkness contentedly, or else walking in darkness, hoping to find the light. Yea, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ [R.V.], who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor. iv. 4.) The light is shining all round them, but they see it not; the light enters souls on their right hand and their left, as they sit in God's house, but they are not lightened thereby.

The message to such is, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14)

With many it is a wilful blindness. They have closed their eyes lest they should see the light. Indeed they close their ears and hearts against the voice and love of Jesus. These love darkness rather than light, and will not come to the light; yet such shall be made willing in the day of the Spirit's power. When God says, "Let there be light," there will be light. Then the man who has been long in the darkness sees himself and his own sinfulness as he never saw them before, and begins to mourn for his sin as he cries out of the deep; and, when humbled in the very dust as a broken vessel, he looks up and sees the glory shining on the face of the dying Saviour, whom he crucified, the glory which was hidden from all the princes of the world, and all the priests of the law; nay, he sees that same Jesus who was wounded for him rising from the dead, ascending upward, and seated at the Father's right hand. A greater glory streams down upon him as he sees Christ's sacrifice accepted of God, and hears a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then the anxious one finds that his sins are washed away. The twofold glory of the cross and the throne dawns upon him; his sins are buried in the sepulchre with Jesus, and his eternity will be spent with Christ upon His throne.

It is the purpose of God that His believing people should have a sense of sin that deepens daily. As

they see Christ's glory sin will appear more heinous than before. It is the Lord's desire that His children should not only come to the light, but walk in the light. The blessed result of this walking is described in I John i. 7: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." The increasing light reveals sin more clearly, and the same light shines over the blood of Christ, so that as soon as we are conscious of guilt we repair immediately to that fountain to be washed, and so are kept cleansed from every spot. The Lord will not rest till His people's righteousness goes forth as brightness; He will not allow any spots to be seen on our travelling dress. May it be ours to live in the light.

2. The light of fire burns. In old times the Lord led Israel all the night through with a light of fire. This was typical of the fire that burns up sin. The Lord will not allow in His people anything contrary to His perfect will. He declares that He will "purge the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning." (Isa. iv. 4.) He will first bring His children to a sense of their sin by the spirit of judgment, and will then consume it by the spirit of burning. We have the same thought in Mal. iii. 2, 3, where it is said of the Lord Jesus, "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver:

and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness:"

All God's people now are the sons of Levi, and it is His purpose to cleanse them. We must gladly admit this mighty operation of the baptism of fire, that we may be like pure silver when Christ comes. We would not have any alloy mixed with the silver then, lest we should be ashamed before Him at His coming. Let us not shrink from the only process by which we can be made like Him. We are reminded of the second part of Isa. lxii. 1, where the Lord declares, "For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the salvation thereof go forth as a lamp that burneth." Believers should be, like John the Baptist, burning as well as shining lights. They should not merely be enlightened with an intellectual illumination, but they should burn with a pure flame. We sometimes meet with Christians so holy that worldly people shrink from being in their company. They cannot bear their society, because they are so like Christ. If you who read these words ever feel this shrinking from the disciple, how will you bear the presence of the Master? "Who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" It is far better to have sin burned up now, than to be burned up ourselves like chaff at the presence of the Lord. We have another beautiful passage bearing on this part of the subject in Song Sol. viii. 6: "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most

vehement flame." Holiness and love are very closely united. When love enters our hearts, and fills them, it consumes everything that is contrary to God's will. Happy is that soul where love conquers and burns, where there is a sacred jealousy of the intrusion of any idol, and where the flame is always mighty and vehement, a very fire of the Lord, as the Hebrew has it here. In Ezekiel i, 13 the appearance of the living creatures who typify the redeemed in glory is said to be "like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning." The Holy Spirit at last assimilates the Church to Himself. Is He compared to burning lamps of fire? So are they. It must be so; for the Holy Ghost is the revelation of God enlightening and purifying the Church, and indwelling it. Is it difficult to conceive of Christ without His people, the Head without the members? It is more impossible to contemplate the Holy Spirit without those whose life He is, for whom and in whom He dwells. May it be said of each of us, "The fire was bright." And may we cry, in the Scriptural words of the Ordination Hymn:-

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.
Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight."

3. Light gladdens. In that very 97th Psalm, where we read of the Lord in verse 3, "A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about," we are told, in verse 11, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." The same fire which burns up Christ's enemies gives joy to His friends. It is like the pillar of cloud which hovered between the Israelites and the Egyptians-in the passage of the Red Sea. "It was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these." (Exod. xiv. 20.) There are no people so happy as those who bask in the smile of the Lord's countenance. The night of weeping is past; the morning of joy is begun. Those are joyous who are forgiven. They have a peace which the world knows not, and a joy with which no stranger can intermeddle. But how much deeper is the bliss of those who are holy, who are sanctified in spirit, soul, and body. In Ps. xlv. 7 we read, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Because Christ was pre-eminently holy He was preeminently happy; and so will it be with all His people. The oil of gladness shines from the face of him who is filled with the Spirit. In proportion as the divine fire burns up our sins do we know what true joy is. Those who have entered upon the blessedness of entire consecration to the Lord's service begin to realize the meaning of those beautiful words even here: "The Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." (Isa.

Ix. 20.) This spirit characterized the early believers. They ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. (Acts ii. 46.) It must be joy even to see by faith the Saviour who bought us, and the King who is preparing a kingdom for us. How unalloyed will that bliss be hereafter! We grant that heaven will be happy in proportion to its holiness. Why should we not realize "the days of heaven upon earth"? O let us walk in the light, that our joy may be full!

4. Light fructifies. In the natural world all productiveness is connected with the light of the sun. The grapes of Italy and the pomegranates of Syria testify to Joseph's blessing - "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun." (Deut. xxxiii. 14.) There is no vigorous, healthy life for animal or vegetable without the direct rays of that great orb. They pierce into the caves of earth and the depths of ocean, imparting tissue and colour. So is it in the spiritual world. The Revised Version reads, in Eph.v. o, according to many old manuscripts, "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." The fruit of light and the fruit of the Spirit is identical. It is He who produces bud, and blossom, and fruit. And there is force in this reading, following as it does the exhortation: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Fruits meet for repentance are good: but the fruit of light is better, deeper, and more abiding. How greatly does the light beautify and refresh the Lord's people!

When Christians walk in the light they are strong;

they grow from babes in Christ to young men in Him, and thus into fathers, who bring forth more fruit in old age, and are fat and flourishing.

May the Church in these days hear and obey the command, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isa. lx. 1, 2.) The light shines only on those who receive and reflect it. May we always live "before the throne." May our light burn brightly both before God and man; for the light comes from the Lord, and should be offered to Him again. Thus shall we be changed into His image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord.





CHAPTER VI.

Liberty, the Spirit's Third Mift.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." -2 Cor. iii. 17.

HEN man was first created, his chief prerogative was dominion over all the creatures; yet he was hardly conscious of his freedom or his power. In an evil hour Satan crept into paradise, and promised Eve an introduction into a larger realm of knowledge and happiness than she already possessed; in fact, he intimated that liberty had been denied her. But the liberty he promised was a lie. From that moment man ceased to be a happy worshipper, and began to be the devil's bond-slave. Henceforth the teeming millions who arose to people the earth have been taken alive by the devil at his will. They think they are free; and their language is, "We can do as we like; we were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" All the time they are puppets, moved up and down by the prince of this world, prisoners in the power of the strong man armed, with a very limited range of action, chattels kept and guarded by Satan in his castle.

It is a blessed awakening when men discover where they are; for as soon as men know for a certainty they are in prison, at the same moment they hear the sound of the jubilee trumpet, and they find that Jesus came to preach the acceptable year of the Lord—the time of deliverance.

There is no other way by which we can be made free but by the Lord Jesus Christ. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." But this redemption can only be applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We are only free when we know it, and no one can teach this convincingly but the same Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." So His third gift is liberty.

The Lord Jesus carries on His work mightily by His Spirit, as He predicted: "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." Thus does He bind Satan, and deliver souls from death.

Let us look a little at the context of the passage in 2 Cor. iii. 17. St. Paul had been speaking of the state of the Israelites. He says that "when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart;" and he adds, "Nevertheless when it" (that is, Israel) "shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Israelites have no liberty to

see or understand the Old Testament. They are fast bound by the yoke of their traditions. What then is meant by the liberty? Liberty to believe, liberty to understand, liberty to appropriate the blessing.

What kind of liberty is it? It was a blessed truth known to David; for he says, "Uphold me with thy free Spirit." (Ps. li. 12.) It was expressly taught by our blessed Lord; for He expounded it to Nicodemus in the words, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) This is often understood of the working of the Holy Spirit, in passing over one man and choosing another. we do not read, "So is the moving of the Holy Spirit," but "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And therefore we know it must be a description of the new-born soul, in whom the Spirit dwells. The Lord meant here to unfold to a master in Israel that spiritual liberty was one of the marks of the new birth. The man who has had his fetters taken off is as free as the wind; he breathes a purer air, a heavenly atmosphere, where God's Spirit dwells. The chains of prejudice and self-will are broken, and he sees all things clearly. Chiefly he can see Christ lifted up for him. There is a coherence and symmetry about all our Lord's discourses, and He goes on to say, in verses 14, 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Surely the Saviour meant to intimate that the man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells is free to behold Christ, and to trust in Him. The outsider cannot tell what actuates and moves the spiritual man; but God's free Spirit dwells within him, and he goes wherever he desires and draws.

Now observe the nature of this liberty.

I. It makes a man free from the law. "What," you will say, "am I to be free from that law which is holy, and just, and good? That law which God gave Himself on mount Sinai in tables of stone, traced with His own fingers? That law which He so often punished the children of Israel for transgressing? That law which long after He pronounced by His holy apostle to be spiritual?" Yes, because it became a yoke of bondage, and it was impossible to keep it. It was ordained unto life, but it wrought death. It would admit of no shortcoming, and no departure from its precepts, and so it entailed a curse. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10.) The moment you cease to observe one of its commandments, the sentence of death is written against you. How glad then the tidings that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. iii. 13, 14.) Wherever the Spirit is received the law can no longer be a yoke. The man who is taught of God knows that Christ has kept the law he had broken, and so it becomes to him a blessing instead of a curse.

The Galatians in the days of St. Paul were in

great error. They had begun in the Spirit, but were seeking to be made perfect by the flesh; and so he indignantly asks them why, after they had been known of God, they were turning again to the weak and beggarly elements of the law, and seeking to be in bondage thereto. (Gal. iv. 9.) Why is the law said to be weak? Because it is too weak to give life to a dead soul, or freedom to an enslaved spirit. Well may the apostle urge his converts, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

All who read these words must be either in bondage or at liberty, either free or under the yoke. How many, without being aware of it, are still bound! Ask yourself, "Am I still trying to keep the law, which I have so often broken? Do I vainly imagine that, though I have broken it ten thousand times, I may yet reach the presence of God by keeping it?" No one can advance a single step in spiritual life until he has received this liberty.

This is also the apostle's argument in Rom. vii.: "Know ye not, brethren, how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as *it* liveth?" Such is the plain meaning of the words. The law is the soul's first husband, and as long as *it* lives it has the dominion. I know not how else there would be any parallel in verse 2: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." And then the

apostle proceeds to show that we are dead to the law, and it is dead to us. We are "married to another," even to Him who is at once the Impersonation of the law, and the Deliverer from its yoke, "even to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." And if there was any further doubt about the meaning, St. Paul clears it up by adding, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held."

The law is no longer a curse to the enlightened believer.

2. The Spirit also sets him free from sin. For although the Christian is freed from the law as a means of salvation, he is not free from it as a rule of life. Nay, the moment he dies to the law, he begins to live unto God. Thus, in this very epistle to the Galatians (ii. 19), St. Paul exclaims, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God." "Through the law;" for this very law, when applied by the Holy Spirit, appeared before me in its grandeur and heart-searching power. This led me to die to the law, not that I should ignore it altogether, but that I should, in a new and better sense, live unto God. When therefore the believer is freed from the curse of the law, he begins to find that the power of Christ enables him to keep it. The same apostle, who in this Galatian epistle contends so earnestly for justification by faith only, with equal force claims sanctification by faith as a foundation truth of the greatest importance. Three times over in chap. iii. he declares that the Galatian Christians had received

the Spirit by the hearing of faith (vv. 2, 5, 14), and wherever the Spirit dwells He sanctifies. And again, he insists that "the just shall live by faith." The sinner is not only saved by faith, but the whole of his after life he lives by faith. So then he conquers sin by faith in the living God. So in v. 6: "In Tesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." No other principle can avail, no other can permanently deliver the sin-laden soul. Still more confidently is this affirmed in v. 16: "Walk in the Spirit, and ve shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The simple rule for deliverance from sin is to walk in the Spirit. "The flesh will still lust against the Spirit," and its tendency will be "that ye may not do the things that ye would," as the Revised Version has correctly translated the latter part of the next verse. But when you walk in the Spirit, the flesh shall not prevail. If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the law; but we bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

This is the great truth illustrated in Romans vi. vii. viii. In vi. 6, 7 St. Paul argues that "our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is *freed from sin*." If you and I believe that Christ kept the law for us, and bore our sins, we are not only pardoned and justified, but joined to the living Christ, and thus freed from sin as a ruling principle in the heart and life.

So in verse 22. "But now being made free from

sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." It is evident therefore that every man indwelt by the Spirit is free from the power and dominion of sin, and he is free to bring forth fruit unto God. All you have to do is to "yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead." He will give you the strength to overcome. Thus faith works by love, purifies the heart, and renews the life. The centre of the whole subject is chapter viii. 2. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." This freedom from the dominion of a ruthless tyrant is entirely wrought by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Spirit also frees from death in all its aspects. Christ took our nature upon Him, that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) This was the description of many of the Old Testament saints. Hezekiah wept sore, and turned his face to the wall, when he heard that he must die. He thought he should "not see the Lord," and he was in "great bitterness." But "our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i, 10.) They were in the twilight before. And so you who are Christ's need not dread death. He is no longer the king of terrors, but a slain foe. In many cases I have seen this fear taken away step by step, in answer to believing prayer, until the ripe

and resigned believer let slip the chains of mortality, and was joyously admitted into the presence of the King. And "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (I Cor. xv. 54.) By whom is this brought about? By "the last Adam, who is a quickening spirit." (v. 45.) It is the Holy Spirit who seals this truth on the heart and understanding. "The Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you," and "He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) As the Spirit is the author of life, it is His prerogative to free from death. God's people have the liberty of an endless life.

4. He also delivers them from the hand of Satan. Who else gave terror to the law, and impetus to sin, and the sting to death? If they are conquered, their master also must be overcome. All the other tyrants obtained their power from him. Sin and death entered the world by him. He turned God's law into a curse instead of a blessing; yet we can be redeemed from his hand. In what way can we go forward to the battle? By the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. "And we must pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Thus shall we prevail against all the fiery darts and all the subtle wiles of the great enemy of souls. Satan himself is a spiritual being, and he is associated with "spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." (Eph. vi. 12, R. V.) Spirit can only be conquered by Spirit. He

who is delivered from Satan's yoke is verily at liberty. He can run in the way of God's commandments.

If you still hesitate to believe the completeness of the liberty, examine the promise in Luke i. 73-75; "The oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." The work is the Lord's, and it is promised by His covenant, and confirmed by His oath. And the Lord has not only declared that He will deliver us from our enemies, but even from fear of them; and He will not only save us one day, but "all the days of our life." Many an anxious soul says, "I am so weak; I cannot fight and overcome." But the Lord has promised to fight for you. Unless you are utterly weak, the power of Christ will never rest on you. A Christian says, "Suppose I backslide." But if you look up and grasp the promise, there is no need that you should. The Lord is able to hold you up, and He has promised to keep you from falling. You need never be afraid. Perfect love casteth out fear.

Where is this liberty seated?

In the spirit, the divine and immortal part of man; for we read in Rom. viii. 16, "The Spirit Himself" (R. V.) "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." He also shews us that we are joint-heirs with Christ. If Christ is free, so are His people. The spirit of the believer is entirely emancipated, and seated with Christ in heavenly places.

In the heart. For, according to 2 Cor. iii. 15, the vail is upon the heart of Israel, and when that is removed liberty ensues. Satan has great power over the affections; but when he is conquered, the ransomed one is free to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.

In the conscience. For it was before enslaved, as well as dark and defiled. But "the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, will purge your conscience to serve the living God." (Heb. ix. 14.) We must be enlightened as to right and wrong before we can be at liberty. Then we are sprinkled (and this is the Spirit's work), in order to serve the living God.

In the understanding. For before we had no power to apprehend the truth with the intellect. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) In such a case all the thoughts and all the arguments are carnal, and originate in the fleshly nature. Until the carnal mind is changed for the spiritual, we cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Spiritual truth can only be explained to spiritual men. (Margin of 1 Cor. ii. 13, R.V.) When liberty reaches the intellect, difficulties are cleared away, and the truth is received by the mightiest mind as by a little child.

In the will. By nature no part of us is so weak as the will. We wish to be better, but cannot carry out our purpose. How happy are those who know the glad reality that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 13.) At the very moment when you are disposed

to say, "O that I could make up my mind to be Christ's entirely!" give yourself to the Lord. He will give tone and power to your purpose, and enable you to accomplish it.

Also liberty in the acts. For God worketh in you, not only to will, but also to do. Before you appropriated this power, you were constrained to say, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Now you understand the meaning of the passage, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. vii. 19, viii. 4.)

Thus the liberty pervades every faculty of the nature, and animates every movement of the renewed man. Only suffer this blessed Spirit to reach you in your entirety, and you will be able to say, "Of His fulness have all we received."

We have yet to wait for the full redemption of the body. It is still subject to sickness and decay. We who have the first-fruits of the Spirit wait for entire deliverance. Then shall we be brought out of the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. This we also learn will be worked out by the mighty operation of the indwelling Spirit. For "if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. viii. 11.) Then shall they be mortal no longer. The mortal will put on immortality, and the corruptible will put on incorruption, and in every part

of our being liberty will dwell. The Spirit that abides in you, believer, is a pledge and earnest of your final and complete emancipation.

May we who have the Spirit value and use our liberty; and, as we walk in and after the Spirit, we shall find nothing impossible.

. And may those who are still in bondage lift their eyes, and they will see Jesus standing at their prison door inviting them to walk at liberty.

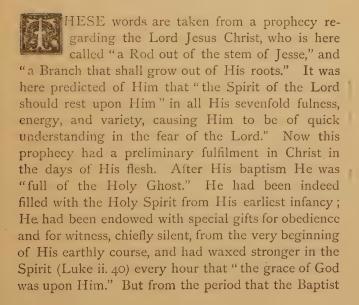




CHAPTER VII.

Unowledge, the Spirit's Fourth Gift.

"The spirit of knowledge."-Isa. xi. 2.



saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, and abiding upon Him, He was specially anointed with the Holy Ghost for the work of the ministry, and He returned after His temptation "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." (Luke iv. 14.)

The remainder of the passage in Isaiah xi. has not yet been accomplished. Beginning at the middle of verse 3, we are in the region of unfulfilled prophecy. Christ has not yet appeared to "judge the world with righteousness," nor to "smite the earth with the breath of His mouth." In due time all this will come to pass, and Christ will exhibit the fulness of the Spirit of judgment.

Now the Spirit rested on Christ, that He might impart Him to His people. Theirs is the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. But out of His sevenfold energies and operations here alluded to, I shall select the spirit of knowledge as the most important, and as the fourth of the great blessings we receive through the same Spirit. And we must consider this in close connection with the spirit of wisdom, as without wisdom we can never use knowledge aright. This is beautifully illustrated by Eph. i. 17, where St. Paul prays for the Ephesian converts, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." There is no wisdom apart from knowledge, and no knowledge of any value without wisdom.

We must be convinced, first, of the absolute neces-

sity of the knowledge which the Holy Spirit gives, and then become acquainted with the nature of the knowledge He imparts.

I. It is a favourite doctrine of the present day, that man can understand spiritual things by his own unaided efforts, and by the natural wisdom he possesses. This is entirely contrary to the word of God. In I Cor. ii. 14 we read, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So also verse II. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." How impossible therefore it is for us by our own searching or our intellect to find out and appropriate spiritual truth. Notice again I Cor. xii. 3, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." And Matt. xi. 27, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." How does the Son reveal the Father? By the Holy Ghost. It is by Him that all knowledge of spiritual things is communicated to man, and that knowledge He is ready to give to every one that is led by Him. It was for this very purpose that the Holy Spirit was promised. "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth," or the whole truth. (John xvi. 13.) He will guide you into all the truth about God, about Christ, and about salvation. If we could discover the truth on these subjects for ourselves, why was the Holy Spirit sent?

No; these things are hid from many, because they will not receive the gift the Lord offers. Many appear to see and know, but they have closed their eyes and shut their ears, and they have no willingness to receive the truth as it is in Jesus.

Indeed, the child of God does not always apprehend all the truth. This is illustrated by one of Asaph's psalms. He is speaking of the prosperity of the wicked, and the envy which was aroused in him when he beheld it. "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me" (or, according to the Prayerbook Version, "too difficult for me"); "until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end." (Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17.) Truth can only be understood in the sanctuary. We can only see light in God's light. The people of God often make the most terrible mistakes, because they do not judge facts in the balance of the sanctuary; in fact, because they do not use the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, live by the Spirit. We who love the Saviour need continually to be enlightened. taught, and strengthened by the Spirit.

There are learned men who say, "Interpret the Bible as you would any other book." They know not that the same Spirit who inspired the word of God can alone interpret it. You cannot treat the Bible as you would any other book, for it is the only one instinct with life, the only one quick and powerful. The Bible must be treated and interpreted as if it were intensely human, yet most completely Divine. Without the Spirit of knowledge it cannot be understood.

But, thanks be to God, the Spirit in this and every aspect of His working is possessed by all believers. St. John and St. Paul give the same testimony on this point. St. John says to the little children in Christ, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," and, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you." (I John ii. 20, 27.) What was true of believers then is true of them now. Although God honours His ministers, yet all His children have an unction from above: they are all taught of God; and though they value spiritual teaching more than any one else, they are independent of it. The Lord is their Shepherd as well as their Saviour, and if they were in a desert, far from the abodes of man, He would feed them with heavenly food. His people will never be left in ignorance about anything they need to know. And so St. Paul writes: "Now we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (I Cor. ii. 12.) The Spirit has not only been granted to believers to quicken them, but to sustain and teach them until they enter into the kingdom.

II. Next, let us consider what we who are believers know. What are the main points on which the Holy Ghost enlightens us? Although there are many topics alluded to in the word of God, the whole matter can be summed up in one word, "the knowledge of Christ." What we need is "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him." (Eph. i. 17.) A

clear, full, complete, comprehensive knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the sum and substance, not only of the apostle Paul's teaching, but even of his knowledge, at Corinth. "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (I Cor. ii. 2.) This was the one topic he was content to know, as opposed to all the wisdom of men, on which the Grecian philosophers prided themselves so much. It was his steady purpose to seem to know nothing more, because for the excellency, the surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, he was content to count all things but loss, and because "Christ crucified" is "the wisdom of God."

That epistle to the Colossians, which treats so fully of wisdom, testifies that in Christ are "all the hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3.) In Him is such fulness of knowledge that, if we continue to receive those treasures, we shall be kept from the vain deceit of philosophy on the one hand, and the burden of ceremonial ordinances on the other. It is a treasure freely made over to the believer. He need never be a pauper. A store of gold is his possession.

Here let me remind you, that the knowledge thus described is not merely intellectual, but experimental. To illustrate this. A man dangerously ill hears of an eminent physician, and sends for him. He is informed that if any man can save him, he can; yet this is only intellectual knowledge. But when the patient has really been brought into contact with the

doctor, and been healed by him, he knows him experimentally. In fact, previously he knew of him; now he knows him. In like manner there is a great difference between knowing about Christ, and knowing Christ. Many an unconverted man thinks he knows the Saviour, when he has merely heard about Him.

Again, take the case of a very poor man. He hears of a most benevolent friend, who gives away large sums to the needy. He thinks he knows him, because he has often seen him. But at last, in the moment of his emergency, when he is absolutely starving, and knows not where to look for food or employment, a knock is heard at his door, and he finds that the gentleman who has been so liberal to others has come to relieve his necessity. Then he becomes acquainted with him as his own friend, and his knowledge of him is of an entirely different character. Job underwent a deep experience, and when the Lord revealed Himself to him, he was constrained to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job xlii. 5.)

Suffer the Holy Ghost to teach you more of Jesus. He longs to be known; and how essential is that knowledge! "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) Christ expects II disciples to know Him. He was obliged to say to one of them, "Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?" (John xiv. 9.)

How strange that one who had been for three years and a half constantly with Him should not know Him! But, my friends, how has it been with you? Have you been for ten, or even twenty years with Christ, and yet do you not know Him? It is not enough to be in His company; you must have fellowship with Him; you must be His friend, like Abraham, and He must be yours. How He yearns to reveal Himself more completely to you in all His sweetness, power, and love!

Christ is the Source whence all knowledge comes, the Centre round whom all knowledge revolves. Let us know Him perfectly, and we shall know all we need to know about ourselves; for this is the first thing we have to discover—our own lost and desperate condition as sinners against a holy God. And the deeper our knowledge of Christ the more fully shall we see our own sinfulness. When Isaiah had a glimpse of the intense holiness and surpassing glory of the Lord of hosts, he cried, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isa. vi. 5.) So will it be with us. The first time we see Jesus we shall weep for those sins of ours which nailed Him to the cross; and the next time we look and obtain a clearer view of His holiness, we shall weep again for the sin that cleaves to us.

It is asked, What attribute in the character of Christ does the Holy Spirit chiefly reveal to us? and what crisis in His life does the same Spirit emphasize and apply? It is His love, and that love above all as shewn when He yielded Himself to die for sinners. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) How happy are those who have been so enlightened as to say, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us!" (I John iv. 16.) God is love, and those who know Christ know His love to them. Do you know this love personally? Can you say, "Jesus died for me?"

In this love there are three great truths sealed by the Holy Spirit.

- I. He reveals Christ as literally bearing my sins. He enables me to say, "He shed His blood for me."
- 2. He reveals the Father as reconciled to me, and enables me to cry, "Abba, Father."
- 3. He shows me that I have eternal life. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Search the eighteen "we knows" of St. John, and you will find none more precious than this.

How much the Lord desires to give, and how much He really imparts to His believing people! Yet Satan is always endeavouring to represent that God is a hard Master, who would keep back from us what is really good and necessary for us. He is a liar from the beginning. The Spirit alone can shew to us the heart of God, and the more we see it the more shall we know that His heart is full of love. and that He is ever bestowing gifts on the rebellious. And when we are rooted and grounded in love to Him, we shall "be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) What a theme! ever growing, yet never thoroughly grasped. We may be constantly fathoming, but the plumbline never reaches the bottom; we may be continually soaring, yet never touch the heavenly places whence that love issues. It passes knowledge, yet it is the only object worth our study. The Spirit desires to teach the Lord's waiting people that the knowledge of the love of Christ is the goal of all perfection. There is such a boundless infinitude about His character that we find St. Paul expressing an earnest desire, "That I may know Him." (Phil. iii. 10.) All he knew before he regarded as nothing; he purposed to begin afresh. It is one thing to know Christ as my Saviour, it is another to know the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

There are three points touched upon by the apostle as part of the Spirit's teaching regarding Christ in Eph. i. 17-19. "The eyes of our understanding" are opened by His gracious influence when we have "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ." The object is that we may know:

1st. "The hope of His calling." This is the condition of joy to which the Lord intends to bring His people.

2nd. "The riches of His inheritance in the saints." This is the joy Christ will have in His people. It is

typified when the Bride says to her Beloved, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." (Song of Solomon iv. 16.)

3rd. "The exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." This is present grace in all its fulness .-

All these are the portion of the child of God, and in proportion as we know Christ better shall we apprehend all these.

We begin our Christian life with the knowledge of Christ, and yet the end is simply a larger, fuller, and more complete knowledge of Him. In Ephesians iv. the chief reason why the various gifts of the Spirit were bestowed is said to have been "for the perfecting of the saints." "Till we all come [or, attain unto. R.V.] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Thus at last shall we be so illumined that our whole body shall be full of light. Then will the Church of Christ become "a perfect man," and reach "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Then shall we begin to see Christ as He is, and to be like Him.

Do you know anything of this experience? not, why not? If you are a believer, you have the Spirit, you are already brought by faith within the veil, and it is your privilege to know what the Lord has prepared for them that love Him. Though this knowledge is hidden from the wise and prudent, it is revealed to the babe. Become a babe that you may know. If you still hesitate, you have the promise, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the

doctrine." (John vii. 17.) If you are only willing, all the joy that belongs to full knowledge shall be yours.

And may those who have this knowledge be ever pressing forward. There is ever a fuller degree of knowledge before you, and see to it that "the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you."





CHAPTER VIII.

Power, the Fifth Gift of the Spirit.

"The Spirit of power."—2 Tim. i. 7.

UR natural condition is described by God as "without strength." We had no power to lift ourselves out of the pit into which we had fallen, nor had we the strength to frame a way of deliverance, nor to accept it when provided and offered to us. But in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, and that strength is for me. "Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee." There is the strength of the Son of His right hand, whom He made strong to bear our iniquities. (Ps. lxxx. 17.) And there is that spiritual strength which the Holy Ghost imparts when He enters into the dead sinner, and nerves his arm to grasp the full salvation already provided for him, and brought within his reach. Both these are in a measure possessed by every believer the moment he appropriates Christ; and of these two the most needful is the power of the Spirit. For all-beautiful and strong and perfect as the salvation in Christ Jesus is, it is

never seen, nor apprehended, nor valued until the Holy Spirit enters the soul, and turns the eye away from all that is attractive in the world, to behold Him who is altogether lovely, and until He unclasps the hand from the dead works to which it is clinging, to link it with the hand of the Living One, together with whom he is raised from the dead. In fact, although Christ for me is a very precious truth, it is all unknown until Christ in me enables me to see Him, and Christ in me is the power of the Holy Ghost. Wherever He is there is power. St. Paul reminds his son Timothy, who was of somewhat a timid temperament, that "God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness (R.V.), but of power." This spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, God has really given to all His children. and now they have to stir it up, and use it. In the previous verse the apostle says, "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee." This cannot wholly refer to ordination; "for," St. Paul adds immediately, "God hath given unto us the Spirit of power." And we know, from many parallel passages, that He has been given to all Christians. It is a gift to be stirred up, and also to be kept. "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." (v. 14.)

This topic touching the spirit of power is the very essence of all God desires to teach us regarding the indwelling and working of His Holy Ghost.

Now it is clear that all true Christians have received the Spirit; but how many of them know little of Him experimentally as the Spirit of power! Do we live and move in this atmosphere? Certainly all believers do not exercise this power; it is almost dormant in some. All have the firstfruits of the Spirit, but all have not the fulness of the Spirit. And if all have this Spirit, undoubtedly all know not "the exceeding greatness of His power." Yet it is "to usward who believe." O may our scanty faith be so enlarged that we may experience the working of His mighty power, and be filled with all the fulness of God! And may we know the glad reality of the power of Christ's resurrection.

This power we may again illustrate from our Saviour's own history. How great was the grace of the Spirit which dwelt in Him even from His infancy! But after His baptism we read, "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan." (Luke iv. 1.) And again, in v. 14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."

There must have been a special meaning about this. And it is an amazing fact that One who had always been perfectly holy, spotless, and wise should have been peculiarly anointed with power before He commenced His ministry. Immediately after this we read that "He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up," and He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And what was the passage which He chose as eminently applicable? That portion of the prophet Esaias where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." And at once the Christ applied

the passage to Himself by saying, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Thus did the Lord commence His ministry, in the power of the Spirit. There was then a power resting upon Him with which He had never been endued before. Well might St. Peter say to Cornelius, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts x. 38.) Soon after we find that "He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." (Mark i. 22.)

His very enemies felt that He had power as they listened to Him; and when He cast out the devils at His word, drove away diseases at His touch, and controlled the winds by the breath of His mouth, it was impossible to deny that His was a greater power than had ever resided in any man before.

Such was the power which rested on the Lord Jesus; and there is a close link between the power which rested on Christ, and the power which flows to us. It was not only prophesied in Isaiah xi. that "the Spirit of might" should rest upon the Branch from Jesse's roots, but also that the same Spirit should "make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." The Spirit will also make the Lord's people to be of quick understanding in heavenly things. Then shall we know the gifts freely given to us of God. We shall discover the link in John i. 32, 33, where John the Baptist says, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me,

Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." We gather from this that the same baptism of power which descended on Christ, and continued with Him, is imparted by the Lord to all His people. It is His prerogative to baptize them with the Holy Ghost. Is He mighty? He makes them mighty too. "Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John xiv. 12.)

This is further illustrated by the history of the apostles and early disciples. Not only did the Master commission His twelve apostles long before Pentecost, and "give them power and authority over all devils" as well as to cure diseases, but He also endued seventy other disciples with a similar power. (Luke ix. 1; x. 1, 17-20.) They returned rejoicing that the devils were subject to them through the name of Jesus. And then this very gift was enlarged and confirmed in the words: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you." So that long before the outpouring of the Spirit a very considerable measure of the power of the Holy Ghost was bestowed on the disciples of the Saviour. Yet they lacked the fulness of the Spirit's power; for after this Peter trembled at the voice of a maid-servant, lost all his. courage, and denied his Master; and all His disciples forsook Him and fled. It is evident that greater

power was to come. This was clearly implied by our Lord when He promised, just before He was taken away, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you" (Luke xxiv. 49); and, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." (Acts i. 8.)

When this power came all the surroundings shewed how forcible it was. It was betokened by a rushing, mighty wind, and by cloven tongues like as of fire, which sat upon each of them. Then were all the one hundred and twenty disciples filled with the Holy Ghost, and they had not only the gift of utterance, but a courage to which they were strangers before. And as all were filled with the Holv Ghost, the Spirit of power must have rested on the women as well as the men, else the prophecy of Joel would not have been fulfilled: "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;" "and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." This power enabled the disciples to speak; it constrained their hearers to listen and believe. It gave such courage to Peter that he could stand before the Sanhedrim unmoved, and he could boldly say, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto God more than unto you, judge ye." Indeed we gather from Acts iv. 31 that the whole infant Church consisting of eight thousand souls was all filled with the Holy Ghost, and all spake the word of God with boldness. This was the happiest period in the history of the Church of Christ. All its members were of one heart and

one soul. Great power descended upon them all, and the whole body was an army of living witnesses for Christ.. What union, what love, what self-sacrifice, what courage it inspired! Why should not we in like manner once more walk in the light of the Lord?

After a while this Divine might did not act with equal force on all the young converts; for we find St. Paul saying in I Cor. iii. I: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Here was a different state of things. The Corinthians had been great sinners; but now they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The apostle does not mean to intimate, when he calls them carnal, that they had wholly relapsed into sin, but simply that they were babes, yet babes in Christ. They were not spiritual, because the Spirit did not all times predominate in them. Their spiritual life was scanty and limited; so four times over he calls them carnal. But what power it needed to turn such sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God! St. Paul experienced this at Corinth as he says, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." (I Cor. ii. 4.) A new "power to edification" was afterwards granted the apostle, which he used in wielding the sword of discipline, and then in guiding the repentant Church.

But there were deeper spiritual truths, which St. Paul could not expound at Corinth, which he was

enabled to open up in his epistle to the Ephesians. The saints at Ephesus knew that they had been "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." They were able to appreciate and receive all that the apostle could reveal on this momentous subject. How wonderful is that passage in chap. i. 17-23, in which St. Paul begins at the shame of the malefactor's cross, passes on to resurrection, and soars upward to the highest place in the universe, at God's right hand, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And this, he asserts, is the measure of "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." The Lord finds sinners grovelling in the dust, condemned to eternal wrath and shame. He makes them die with Christ, then causes them to experience the power of His resurrection, and raises them to the highest heaven. Immeasurably great is the chasm between the malefactor's cross and the victor's crown; but it exactly represents the exceeding greatness of the Lord's power in raising and purifying believers now. He is able to make them even here as triumphant as their Master, and this is no mere grand ideal; for "the Church is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Christ literally fills believers by His Spirit wherever there is no opposition on their part. His life overflows into them, and He fills them all.

Then we have the sublime prayer in chap. iii. 14-21. The 16th verse is the most important: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." It is often ex-

pounded as if it meant that Christ had never entered the hearts of the Ephesian believers before. Yet this is impossible. They were "in Christ Jesus." They had been "quickened together with Him." "They had been builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Christ was in them, the Hope of glory. The point of the passage is to be found in the words "by faith." It was a further blessing that they needed. The apostle's prayer was, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" that is, that you may always know, and realize, and live on the fact that Christ dwells in your hearts, and so be strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man. Thus would they be rooted and grounded in love, and be able to comprehend with all saints the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. Then would they be filled with all the fulness of God. Nor would any praise be ascribed to man. It is God who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think; not merely all that we ask, though that might be large, but above all that we ask; not merely all we think, though that is infinitely larger, but above all that we think. Yet that is not sufficient. Abundantly above all that we ask or think. And there is a greater climax still, "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." How great is God's power within the believer! how full His promises! Yet there is a variety in Christians. It is "according to the power that worketh in us." We may hinder that power, or not give it full play. But all the glory must be given to God, as the power is His alone.

This power was typified in the history of Samson. "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent the lion as if he had been a kid, and he had nothing in his hand." (Judges xiv. 6.) What does this teach us? That Satan, our great enemy, is like a young lion. But if the Spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon us, we shall conquer him without any strength of our own. We too must have nothing in our hand.

Paul certainly possessed this power; for he says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.) And, "most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) This is the condition to which the Lord desires to bring us, that we may be so utterly weak and helpless that the power of Christ may rest upon us. All our effort and labour and struggle must cease. "For he that is entered into His [God's] rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." (Heb. iv. 10.) How happy are those who have reached this stage of rest, and live wholly in a power not their own!

St. John realized the same power; for he says, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John v. 4.)

So was it with Jacob when he wrestled with the Lord at Peniel. All the time he used his own power he could obtain no blessing; but when he was lamed, he became a prince, and as such he had power with God and with men, and prevailed. The face of God and the touch of God revealed to him that God's strength was made perfect in his weakness.

Many of the saints of the Lord in after days have been mighty in this Divine power. Luther was at length enabled to realize it. Twice already in his lifetime the words, "The just shall live by faith," had been powerfully impressed upon his soul. But the hour of complete emancipation had not come. He had often been told that if he climbed up Pilate's staircase at Rome on his knees, he would thereby attain full salvation. On his visit to the Eternal City he was carrying this out; and as he was painfully creeping up the stairs, those words, "The just shall live by faith," again seemed to be uttered from heaven so distinctly that he started, and in a moment he leaped upon his feet, the freeman of the Lord. "Then," says he, "I felt myself born again as a new man, and I entered by an open door into the very Paradise of God. From that hour I saw the precious and holy Scriptures with new eyes. Truly this text was to me the very gate of heaven."

It has been truly observed that this quotation occurs thrice in the New Testament, and each time with a different meaning. "The just shall live by faith." In Rom. i. 17 it means that he shall enter into the life of the justified by faith. In Gal. iii. 11, that he shall continue that life, and be sanctified by faith. And in Heb. x. 38, that he shall at last attain complete salvation by faith.

The attainment of this power was a definite stage in the life of D'Aubigne. Some years after his conversion he was at Kiel, and he was studying the Scriptures with three of his brethren. When they had reached the latter part of Eph. iii. an aged professor, who was one of the party, refused to enter into any detailed solution of the difficulties of the passage until they had all knelt together in prayer, saying that they must be firmly settled in the grace of Christ, and that the light which proceeds from Him would disperse all darkness. "When," says he, "we had read the last two verses of the chaper, 'Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,' &c., this expression fell upon my soul as a revelation from God: 'He can do by His power above all that we ask, above all even that we think: nav. exceeding abundantly above all.' A full trust in Christ for the work to be done now filled by soul. We then again all united in prayer. When I arose, I felt as if my wings had been renewed as the wings of eagles. All my doubts were removed, my anguish was quelled, and the Lord extended to me peace as a river. Then I began to comprehend with all saints the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Then I was able to say, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

John Knox had this power when Mary Queen of Scots used to say that she dreaded his prayers more than all the armies of Queen Elizabeth.

The late Mr. Tucker, of Madras, wielded a similar influence; for when the Governor wished to introduce a new project, he used to inquire what Mr. Tucker thought of it.

Time would fail to give further instances of such.

They have been manifested among Churchmen and Nonconformists. In all ages God has endowed His people with power from above.

And now the most practical question arises, How is this power to be obtained?

First, be persuaded that this is the very truth of God, and that these blessings are the prerogative of all believers. The weakest babe in Christ has the Spirit, therefore he has power. All he has to do is to use it. You must approach the word of God without prejudice or self-will; you must come as a little child in all earnestness, sincerity, and expectation, and the Lord will reveal Himself to you.

Secondly, in will and purpose separate yourself from every sin, and yield yourself to God. Though you have no power to shake off sin, you can put yourself in the Lord's hands, and He will fight for you.

This subject specially applies to those who are believers already; but if any are disposed to come to Christ for the first time for pardon, why should they not trust Him for power also? The message to such is, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And when you walk in the light of the Lord you will be mighty.

Do you urge, "I have long been struggling against sin in vain?" Yield yourself to the Lord as one that is alive from the dead. The Spirit of power will enter into your heart, bringing peace and new strength.

If peace is already your portion, give up, in Divine power, the idols which lurk within. All is possible for God in you. Is not He the Potter, and you the clay? He is ready to mould you according to His will, and make you a vessel meet for the Master's use.

Thirdly, expect the power. Ask, and you shall receive immediately; for the gift is already yours. You need not tarry till you be endued with power from on high. The conditions now are different to what they were when the disciples were waiting at Jerusalem. Now the Spirit is outpoured. Pentecost has long since fully come. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

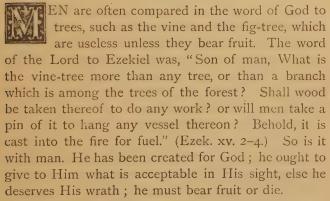




CHAPTER IX.

fruitfulness, the Spirit's Sixth Gift.

- "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—Gal. v. 22, 23.
- "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."—Song Sol. iv. 16.



But the Lord's expectation and disappointment concerning us is touchingly described in Luke xiii. 7: "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit

on this fig-tree, and find none." Truly He might say this of us. How long He has been seeking fruit at our hands, and has not met with it!

We have another aspect of the same truth in Isa. v. 1. 2: "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." How clearly we have here the Father speaking to His Son, who alone is His Well-beloved. He had done everything for Israel; He had fenced it round from the heathen, gathered out the stones of difficulty, and provided every means for the ripening of its fruit. But what was the Divine verdict? When He looked for grapes, there were only wild grapes. It could not be said that there was no fruit, but there was no fruit acceptable unto God.

Again, we have the same judgment clearly expressed in Hosea x. I: "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself." Fruit agreeable unto self is not pleasing unto God. So we find, according to some renderings of Romans vi. 21: "What fruit had ye then? things whereof ye are ashamed."

The fruit the Lord expects is repentance and holiness. So we find it described as "fruit unto God," and "fruit unto holiness." (Rom. vii. 4, vi. 22.) The fruit must be such as is acceptable unto God, and not to the man who produces it.

But the natural man seeks the fruit of his own imaginations, the fruit of his own devices or desires. Even the awakened man who is striving after amendment of life seeks for such fruit as will be satisfactory and acceptable to himself. He looks to see if his repentance and his renewed life are pleasant in his own eyes. This is not necessarily acceptable to God. It must be "fruit unto God," such as He commands, loves, and delights in. Not fruit for the natural man, not fruit for the renewed man, but strictly fruit unto God.

The Israelite of old was taught that he must come at the beginning of harvest, and take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, and give it to the priest, that it might be set down before the altar of the Lord his God. He was then to worship the Lord, and after that to rejoice in every good thing the Lord had given him. (Deut. xxvi.) Does not this teach us that we should consecrate our lives to the Lord? We should yield Him the best of our affections, powers, and capacities. The Lord will be satisfied with nothing else. He saith, "My soul desired the first ripe fruit."

The young are invited to give their opening years to the Saviour, to yield Him their choicest and best hours. This is the fruit He delights in. Whereas fruit for self is "fruit unto death," the end of a life made fruitful unto God is everlasting life.

The Israelite who had presented his first-fruits returned home with the knowledge that God had accepted his gift. He could now rejoice in all that he put his hand to. This was Solomon's thought

when he said, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." (Eccles. ix. 7.) When God accepts your sacrifice and first-fruits, and you are wholly consecrated unto God, your life shall be bright with His beauty.

Fruit may be regarded as the sixth gift of the Holy Ghost. It is a full topic. We must inquire:

I. How this fruit is produced.

II. The nature of this fruit.

III. The variety of it.

IV. The various stages of it.

V. How we are to bear fruit.

I. As life proceeds from the Holy Spirit, so must it be with fruit in like manner. Therefore the graces mentioned in Gal. v. 22, 23 are called the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore the Bride in Song Sol. iv. 16 exclaims, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." It is only when the Spirit under the figure of wind blows upon the garden that the spices exhale. It is only when the blessed personality of the Holv Ghost is united to the spirit of the renewed man that fruit is produced in his life and character. The same truth is set forth by our Lord. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John xv. 4.) And we can only abide in Christ by the power of His Spirit. If we have close fellowship with Christ, we bear fruit; and apart from the Spirit there is no fruit.

Two thoughts which arise out of this part of the subject are these:

- I. Are you seeking to work out these graces, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, &c., by your unaided strength? If so, it is utterly impossible. Yet I suppose that at some period or other you have all endeavoured to do this. You have tried to be loving, and meek, and joyous by efforts of your own. And what was the result? You failed completely, because you had not begun aright. It is impossible for us to work out a righteousness of our own, or to produce fruit unto God by self-efforts. Just as the righteousness in which you must be clothed in order to appear before God is His free gift, so is it with the righteousness which must be imparted to you. This also is God's free gift. You may fortify yourself with strong resolutions, but they will all fail. The renewed man is just as weak as he was before. You must not suppose because you are a changed man that you have any power in yourself. It was to His own disciples that Jesus said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Without Me ye cannot do a single act, utter a single word, think a single right thought. Apart from Me, apart from My Spirit, ve are helpless. Ye must be joined to Me before ve can work. "From Me is thy fruit found." (Hosea xiv. 8.) Not only do natural men fail for lack of keeping this in mind, but spiritual men also. We must hang upon Christ to work in us both to will and to do.
- 2. The next is an encouraging thought. When the Spirit works freely He works mightily. Fruit is really

put forth, fruit pleasant in God's eyes. We have cause to despair when we look to ourselves, but we shall be lifted up if we lay hold of the power of the Spirit. The Lord says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." There is no doubt about it. When the dew from above descends the believer becomes fair as the lily, and grows as fast; he is more firmly rooted and grounded in Divine love, and "his beauty is as the olive-tree;" he is marked by fruitfulness. "Those who dwell under his shadow also revive," and they too grow fruitful as the vine. The believer who is filled with the Spirit is a man in labours more abundant, and he wins many souls to Christ. When men are God-possessed, then a little company who were once like a handful of corn make the world to shake with the fervency and enthusiasm of their lives.

Sometimes the Spirit awakes us like the cold north wind of adversity, rousing us with His mighty blast of convicting discipline; and sometimes He comes gently, stealing like the soft south wind of prosperity, comforting, and cheering. But whenever He blows upon His garden the spices yield a sweet perfume.

II. The nature of the fruit: what is it? All such words, thoughts, and acts as are well-pleasing to God. "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." It is in fact, as we have already seen, "fruit unto holiness," and "fruit unto God."

We have a cluster of this fruit in that passage out of Galatians v., which bears so closely on the subject.

Love is the first fruit of the Spirit, because there is no life without love, and no progress without more love. Faith only works by love. This fruit ought to be possessed in all its richness and ripeness by all the Lord's people. There are some who say, "I have faith, and I believe that Jesus died for me." But of what avail is this if you are not constrained by love to give up sin and the world, and devote yourself wholly to the service of Him who died for you? Yours is only a barren, invisible fruit, fruit which you cannot shew to other Christians, and certainly cannot shew to Christ; for He whose eyes are as a flame of fire saith, "I know thy works." The source of this love is evident. It is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us," and it is the very "love of God;" for it is God-given. (Rom. v. 5.) How happy and winning are those who have the love which suffereth long, and is kind, which doth not behave itself unseemly, and seeketh not her own! (I Cor. xiii.)

So it is with joy. This is the oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed above His fellows. (Ps. xlv.) How wonderful that He, who was the Man of sorrows, should yet have possessed fulness of joy! It was the joy set before Him which enabled Him to endure the cross and despise the shame. He saw of the travail of His soul and was satisfied; and those who possess His Spirit are glad. Weeping has passed away; they inherit the joy of the resurrection-morning; and even though they are in heaviness through manifold temptations, when by faith they see Jesus, and are assured of the full salvation ready to be revealed,

they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Active, laborious Christians must be bright; for "the joy of the Lord is our strength." And our Saviour tells us that the secret of bearing much fruit, even the fruit of joy, is to abide in Him; and He adds, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John xv. 11.)

Peace is another fruit. If you evidence to Christ and to the world the peace that dwells within, it is because the Spirit first sealed it on vour heart and conscience. This is a truth taught in the Old Testament: "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him." (Isa. lvii. 19.) No one can offer peace to the rebellious child but the Father against whom he has sinned, and none can introduce that peace into the heart but the Spirit of adoption. It is He who shews that God has made peace by the blood of Christ's cross, and sprinkling that blood upon the conscience brings tranquillity there; it is He also who causes "the increase of peace" (Isa. ix. 7), until it reaches the unruffled calm possessed by a soul ever looking upward. For such only realize the promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.)

Long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness are closely linked together; and they seem like developments of that love that worketh no ill to his neighbour, that beareth all things, and hopeth all things.

Faith here probably means fidelity to God and man.

The Christian will be taught of the Spirit to live and move "as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye," and to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man. He will be made a faithful steward. A believer who is "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," brings forth fruit that is acceptable both to Christ and to the world.

Meekness is commended by our Lord. The meek are blessed, for they shall inherit the earth, and the poor in spirit have for their portion the kingdom of heaven.

Temperance, which is the power to keep our nature with all its passions under, is undoubtedly the work of the Spirit. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) And again, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.) What to nature is impossible is wrought by the mighty working of the Holy Ghost.

The variety of these fruits is illustrated in the Song of Solomon iv. 13, 14: "Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices." We perceive that some of these pleasant fruits taste sweet, and others smell sweet. This shows that not only are the acts of thriving believers sweet, but their whole life is fragrant before God. The love and the devotion that pervade it is "an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. v. 2.) The life of each one

within whom the Spirit dwells should be thus sweet and fragrant.

Let us inquire more particularly what is the meaning of this cry, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south." It shows that though the fruits are growing, they are not ripe until they have been perfected by the Spirit's gracious influence. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." (Heb. xii. 11.) That is the north wind. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." (Ps. xviii. 35.) That is the south wind. And then the two working together produce those fruits which are so pleasant to God. Then can the bride say, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits." They are all His fruits. He produced them, and He has a right to them, and when such fruits are fruits offered to Him, Hedelighteth in them. The Lord Jesus answers every heaven-taught prayer; He responds to every Spirit-breathed cry. So we have the answer to this request in chap. v. I. "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey." The Saviour takes great delight in the fruit of the vineyard which His right hand has planted, and of the garden which He has tended, cherished, and watered. He does see of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. The myrrh is the fragrance of a life of holy self-sacrifice. This is the first spice Christ gathers. He loves the savour of a consecrated life. Love begets love, and feeds on

it. It was this that led the heavenly Bridegroom to cry, in chap. iv. 10, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine; and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" Nothing is so sweet to Christ as a forgiven sinner who loves Him much. As for the bride's ointment, it is the unction of the Holy Ghost from above, and is sweeter than all spices to the Saviour who imparted it. And in the next verse we get the clue to the meaning of the honey and the milk, "Thy lips, O my. spouse, drop as the honeycomb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." The word of God is said by David to be "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." So the lips of the believer, who is deeply and experimentally taught by the Spirit in the Word, drop as an honeycomb. They are like the abounding virgin honey, which drops from the very rocks of Palestine. In this image there is no mere intellectual acquaintance with the letter of the Bible. We have here one who has been caught up, so to speak, to the third heaven, and filled with the very fulness of God. There is such fellowship between Christ and the ripe believer, that He listens to his words, and (wonder of wonders) feeds upon them, else He could not say, "I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk." We have here Christ satisfied with His own image, and delighting in the life, the words, the thoughts, which His own Spirit has inbreathed.

Could this be said of us? Are our lives thus accept-

able to God? Do our lips drop as a honeycomb with heavenly truth? If so, then Jesus will come into His garden and cat His pleasant fruits. The love of Christ for the sinners whom He bought is very great. He yearns for them to bring forth fruit in which His soul delighteth.

III. There are various stages in this fruit. There is first the bud, then the tender grape, then the first ripe fruit. So in John xv. we have fruit, more fruit, · and much fruit. In Mark iv. 28 we read, "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Again, in Matt. xiii. 8, "Fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." We gather from these passages that there are three great varieties of Christians, and also that the same believer corresponds to these various stages of ripeness at different periods of his spiritual history. It is sad to think that some children of God bear little fruit all their days, while others steadily grow on from thirtyfold to sixtyfold, and from sixtyfold to an hundredfold. These are "like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

So, in 1 John ii. 12-14, we have the description of little children in Christ, young men in Him, and fathers in Him. The little children know that their sins are forgiven them for His name's sake, and they know the Father. The young men have the word of God abiding in them, and they have overcome the wicked one. The fathers know Him who is from the beginning, namely, Jesus Christ.

It is the Lord's desire that all His people should bear more fruit. (John xv. 2.) He is not satisfied with that to which we have already attained. But "herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (xv. 8.) Nothing short of this brings glory to God. He would have our lives like Eshcol-clusters, so rich and full that two men had to bear them on their shoulders. Will not you thus glorify God?

IV. If you ask, "How am I to bear fruit pleasing to God?" this practical question may be answered in three ways.

First, there is no fruit without faith. Jesus says, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches." Unless we believe this, and constantly realize our union with Christ by faith, we can bring forth no particle of fruit acceptable unto God.

Before the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven, He breathed on His disciples, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (John xx. 22.) And in answer to their expectant faith the Holy Ghost descended upon them on the day of Pentecost in the fulness of His power. So now Jesus says to all His believing people, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." We must therefore continue to receive more of the grace of this blessed Spirit who is already our portion. In answer to all that God offers we must say, "I praise thee, O Lord," and the fruits we long for will be manifested in our lives.

2. Discipline is the next means. This is indicated when the Saviour saith, "Every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth

more fruit." (John xv. 2.) When the gardener cleans off the tops of the branches, they become more fruitful. It is not pleasant for us to have anything cut off on which our heart is set, or to have self brought low; but it is the Lord's gracious method to bring us thus nearer to Himself. There is force in the expression, "Enduring chastening." Some kick against it, and so they do not profit by it. But "if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." (Heb. xii. 7.) At these times God treats us as a Father, and that "for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." (2. 10.) Nothing short of His own holiness is the standard He has set before us. And shall we shrink from the process? We must be like Himself. He was that "corn of wheat which fell into the ground and died, and thus brought forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) Let us not be content to "abide alone," satisfied merely with our own salvation. But let us be willing at all risks to bring forth much fruit.

3. Fellowship with Christ is another means. The Master plainly says, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (John xv. 5.) To abide in Him is to live where He lives, to think what He thinks, and to do what He does. To abide in Him is to be continually in His presence, to hide in His wounded side, to be always covered with His righteousness, and to have no doubt of my adoption as His child. To abide in Him is to stand on the rock of Divine certainty, to be unmoved by the taunts of this passing world, and heedless of

its smiles. It is to be victorious over fears, and doubts, and perplexities. To abide in Christ is to be strong in His strength, happy with His smile, and pure with His holiness. To abide in Him is to take every spot which appears on the travelling robe immediately to be washed out in His blood, and purified by His Spirit. So to abide is to be more than conqueror through Him who loved me.

Yet this is the privilege of the weakest believer, if he will only claim it. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant"

May we learn this secret. Then will the Lord manifest Himself to us, and in the light of His countenance the precious fruits will ripen.





CHAPTER X.

Poliness, the Spirit's Sebenth Gift.

"The Spirit of holiness."-Rom. i. 4.

HE condition of man ever since the fall has been all unholy. We have this graphically sketched for us in a figure in Isaiah i. 5. 6: "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Here we have a description of every human being who has ever been born into the world. Spiritually he is a mass of bruises, and these bruises cannot be cured or mollified. His whole head is sick; for he cannot think aright, nor frame a way of recovery. His whole heart is faint; for he cannot love God aright. He is incurably leprous and palsied. Again, when we go back to the early history of the world, what is God's verdict? "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.) Just before this we read that there were mighty men and men of renown on the earth in those days. But, spite of their might and spite of their renown, every imagination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil continually. This is the description of each of us before grace has begun to work; not merely in act, but even in thought, only evil continually. Much later in the world's history we have a precisely similar Divine verdict. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Ps. xiv. 3, 4.) Now in both these texts observe the expressions: "The Lord looked down from heaven," "God saw." Neither your neighbour nor your most intimate friend can see the thoughts of your heart. You are yourself very insensible of much of the evil that is there; you would be startled at the iniquity that lurks within during one short hour; but the flame-bright eye of God discerns the whole; all is patent before His gaze. Philosophers and men of renown say that there is much good in man, that there are many who desire purity, and seek after holiness. But the Lord declares that there is not one who even seeks after Him. There may be some who seek their own imperfect standard of holiness, but they do not seek Him who alone is perfectly holy. Again, if we look into these passages we see that the ruin is universal, because it reaches to every imagination of the thoughts of the heart, and that continually, and because it includes *all* the children of men. Whatever therefore the wisest men of the world may say, we must accept God's description of the world and of ourselves. Nay, the lightning flash of His eye dispels and destroys all these refuges of lies, and shews that we have not a spark of true holiness.

How vast, how infinite the contrast when we begin to contemplate God! God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, compose the Trinity immeasurably holy. The holiness of God is unfathomable. Eternity cannot describe it. But there is no attribute of the Almighty on which the redeemed dwell so often as His holiness. The threefold holiness of the Trinity is brought before us by the cry of the seraphs in Isaiah vi. 3: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory," Who can doubt that here holiness is ascribed to each Person of the Trinity? All His people give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness. This truth is confirmed to us in the New Testament, where the four living creatures who typify the ransomed in glory "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. iv. 8.) We may gather from these passages that throughout the ages of a holy and happy eternity it will be the delight of the redeemed Church of God to ascribe unto Him who loved, and bought, and sanctified them infinite and transcendent holiness. Holiness, in the true sense of the word. belongs exclusively to God; it cannot be an attribute of man. Those who sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb say, "Thou only art holy" (Rev. xv. 4); and these precious words we utter continually in our scriptural communion service.

I. How then is man to attain any measure of holiness?

We read in Heb. xii. 14, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But how is this gulf to be bridged over? On the one side there is man, utterly guilty, and entirely unholy; and on the other hand there is God, perfectly holy, spotless, and pure. How is sinful man to be brought into contact with a God who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? The wicked cannot stand in His sight, and before Him the empires of the world will soon disappear, as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors.

The answer to this question, How shall guilty man appear before a holy God? is twofold.

I. Judicially this is brought about by the blood of Christ. This gives the sinner the right to appear in the presence of God. We "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." (Heb. x. 19.) You know that there were two principal parts in the tabernacle and in the temple, the holy place and the holy of holies, and that this last signified the immediate presence of God. It was called the holy of holies, or the holiest of all, because the glory of God dwelt there. There was a veil between it and the holy place, which only the high priest was permitted to enter, and that once a year; but not without

blood, which he sprinkled before the mercy-seat seven times. What do these things mean? They shew that we could never have approached God unless the blood of a perfect sacrifice had been shed and accepted for us. When Jesus breathed His last on Calvary, that veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And now that He has entered, so to speak, within the veil, into the very presence of God, for us, pleading the merit of His own blood, His message to us is, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." (Rev. iii. 8.) Now therefore all that believe are true priests, and they can draw nigh to God, and offer unto Him acceptable sacrifice. Praise Him for this, you who were once sin-stained and defiled. Thus "Christ Jesus was of God made unto us sanctification." (I Cor. i. 30.) And "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Heb. x. 10.) Here the word "sanctified" must mean "pronounced holy." We are pronounced holy as regards our standing before God by the blood of Christ alone. Though the old sacrifices and ceremonies, and the best works man can devise, can never take away sins, "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." (Heb. x. 14.) As regards their position before God, those who are sprinkled with the Saviour's blood are "perfect for ever." No one can impeach their title, or impute to them any guilt. The Lord, who is holy and true, gives a white robe to every believing soul. Now he is no longer defiled by guilt; but, clad in Christ's own righteousness, he is as fully and as

eternally accepted before God as His well-beloved Son.

2. Inherently this is imparted to the soul by the Holy Ghost. The sinner brought nigh to God needs an indwelling holiness, or else he might never remainin the presence of God. Else he could say, "I have still within a heart of sin; even though I am fully pardoned and justified, I shall be as sinful to-morrow as I was before." But the Spirit graciously vouchsafes to enter the heart of the pardoned man. "God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) Again and again we read, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." (I Cor. vi. 19.) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. iii. 16.) He is called the Spirit of holiness, not merely on account of His own nature, but because He imparts holiness to those in whom He dwells. Holiness is therefore His greatest gift. It may here be last in order, but it is first in necessity. There is no one in whom the Spirit dwells whom He does not purify. He can neither dwell nor walk in an unholy soul. Psalm lxviii. represents the Lord as a holy God. "terrible out of His holy places." Yet "the God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people." He breaks the power of cancelled sin, and makes the freed spirit to soar like the eagle.

There can be no other agency by which the Father and the Son bring about this purity in the heart and life but by the Holy Ghost. Holiness can only be wrought by a spiritual process. No material or carnal

ordinances can accomplish it. It is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart of the man whom He makes spiritual.

This twofold washing, twofold justifying, and twofold sanctifying is alluded to by St. Paul in I Cor. vi.
II. "But ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were
justified (R.V.) in [or by] the name of the Lord Jesus,
and by the Spirit of our God." These three blessings
are therefore all secured by the name of the Lord
Jesus, all appropriated by the Spirit of our God.

Let me ask, What is your position in this all-important matter of holiness? Have you in any measure received it, or do you earnestly desire it? If so, how ready is your heavenly Father to grant you this great

gift.

II. Next comes the question, What is holiness? If we look to the perfect standard, it has two elements. entire separation from sin, and complete dedication to the Lord's service. Both these were eminently true of Christ, who was the Pattern Believer. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," free even from the slightest taint of sin; and He was wholly consecrated to the service of God. He could say of His Father, "I do always the things which please Him." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." Every thought, word, and act with Him was for God. It is only in a partial sense that either of these can be true of believers; yet, though absolute holiness may be unattainable here, no lower standard is set before the Christian. "As He which has called you is holy, be ye yourselves holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy." (I Peter i. 15, 16, R.V.)

I. Now "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" with Him. He must therefore be completely separated from sin. "For "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" You cannot be one with the Lord and love idols. If the whole heart be not Christ's, yours will not be an entire allegiance, nor will it be acceptable to Him. You cannot be received into full fellowship with God. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. and be a Father unto you." (2 Cor. vi. 16-18.) How searching ought our examination of ourselves to be, under the special guiding of the Holy Spirit. In Numbers xix. we are taught that if any one touched the bone of a man, or even walked over a grave, he was accounted unclean. This points out to us that we are often brought in contact with sin, and defiled thereby without being aware of it. Our eyes need to be opened to see the abominations within and around us. And when we discern that we have been defiled, we must have recourse to the water of separation in order to be cleansed. We must come to the Spirit-inspired Word that testifies of Jesus, and thus the spot shall be washed away.

This perfect separation from sin must therefore be carried away in two ways; first, by renouncing sin entirely in purpose and endeavour; and secondly, by appropriating the Word that speaks of the blood whenever we have contracted defilement.

2. The believer must also be wholly dedicated to God. For this reason all that was brought in contact with God was called holy. We read of holy vessels, holy offerings, a holy altar, a holy ark, a holy sanctuary. And this was eminently portrayed when the high priest was commanded to wear graven upon a plate of pure gold upon his head the words, "Holiness to the Lord." (Exod. xxviii. 36.) We read, "The body is for the Lord." (I Cor. vi. 13.) How much more the soul and the spirit! Our whole life, with all our acts and thoughts, ought to be, not for ourselves, but for the Lord. He has promised to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, if we only take the weapons which are "mighty through God." (2 Cor. x. 5, 6.)

In the millennial dispensation it will even be written on the bells of the horses, "Holiness unto the Lord;" and "every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." (Zech. xiv. 20, 21.) If God can thus sanctify inanimate creation, together with the beasts that perish, how much more can He do for you, O ye of little faith!

III. Is it asked, "How is this blessing of holiness to be appropriated by us?"

If any of you who read these words are conscious that you have never received the first-fruits of the blessing, have never yet been either pardoned or sanctified, then be assured how ready your Father is to give you His Holy Spirit. Christ cast out many devils and unclean spirits in the days of His flesh. He is able and willing to do the same now. And

how necessary it is; for Satan is the spirit that now worketh in all the children of disobedience, that is, in all those who are neglecting God's salvation, or delaying to accept it.

Do any admit, "This is true in my case. reigns in me, and I cannot cast him out"? Then, though you cannot eject him, Jesus can. He is able to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and when He speaks He must be obeyed.

But most of those who ask the question have already been born again, and are not strangers to the new heart. Still you are conscious that your victory is incomplete, and you long for more complete unison with the will of God. The answers in this case must be almost identical with those given in the last chapter.

There is no other way to be holy except by more complete faith. When I discover that the Lord has really made over to me the Spirit of holiness, I shall receive that Spirit in all His fulness. I must be persuaded that when God commands He imparts the power to obey; and that when God gives, it is my duty to receive. He means you to have this great blessing. Will you not appropriate it, use it, live upon it? You are fully filled in Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore mortify your members upon earth. fore put off the old man, and put on the new man. If you have faith, you will walk in the Spirit, and to this is annexed the promise, "Ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.)

Another condition on our part is perfect love. We find this in John xiv. 23: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." We are prone to forget that faith only works by love, and no principle can impel or constrain but love to Christ. Without such love we cannot give up our idols. We must have such a love to Him as will fill and animate our whole nature. Not till then will God manifest Himself to us in all His beauty and all His fulness. Only those who are rooted and grounded in love can comprehend or know aught of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Only those who thus love can be filled with all the fulness of God. (Eph. iii. 17-19.)

If it is asked, What is God's method of bestowing the blessing of holiness? I answer again, It is often by chastening. This dislodges a man from the world, and brings him near to God.

It is also by setting before the believer exceeding great and precious promises to feed upon and appropriate, "that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.) How grand, how wonderful, this expression is! To flesh and blood it seems, nay, is, impossible. But there is nothing impossible with God.

But what we must specially look for is the fulfilment of the Lord's promise in John xiv. 21-23: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will

manifest myself to him." Here is a distinct promise that the Lord will manifest or reveal Himself to the loving soul. First, we have the definition of love on the part of a believer; it is evidenced in possessing and keeping Christ's commandments. Next, we have the promise that the Father and the Son will love the disciple who is himself filled with intense love, and then follows the intimation that a special manifestation of Christ to such an one will follow. How eagerly we ought to expect the realization of such a promise! and how faithfully should we follow the conditions of its bestowal.

The manifestation of Christ! It is what all the patriarchs of the Old Testament desired; it is what in a measure was granted to Abraham's faith, for the Lord appeared unto him, and he tarried interceding in the presence of the Lord (Gen. xvii. 1, xviii. 1, 22); it is what even Jacob was permitted to realize, for he saw God face to face, and grew in spiritual power as the strength of the old man diminished; it is what Moses longed for as he cried, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory" (Exod. xxxiii. 18); it is what Isaiah was permitted to behold when the Lord's glory filled the temple, and it first smote him with a sense of his unworthiness, and then filled him with Divine power. A manifestation of Christ! It is what indeed was granted to the apostles in its most perfect and touching form, when they saw God manifest in the flesh, heard His gracious words, and witnessed His works of mercy. And yet how dim was their vision of spiritual things! how little they knew of that Christ

who was so close to them! and how entirely they lacked the courage to suffer with Him! What I need is not a manifestation of Christ to me, but a manifestation of Christ in me; and this can only be received by His Spirit. And it was when He was unfolding the promise of "another Comforter" to be "in" the disciples that the Lord declared He would thus manifest Himself. But "Judas saith unto him not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" By the word "how" he meant, "In what way shall we see Thee? How will it be possible for us to discern Thee, and yet for the world not to be aware of Thy presence?" And then Christ revealed more fully the method in which He would appear. "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The method will be this: faith that worketh by love will loose the bars of the soul; the blessed Trinity will enter; there will be no intermittent communion, but a perpetual fellowship between the soul and God. The Spirit will make His continual abode there, and nothing that defileth shall enter. We must sadly admit that though the indwelling of the Spirit is the privilege and possession of all believers, often the Lord seems like "a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night, . . . as a mighty man that cannot save." (Jer. xiv. 8, 9.) My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Is the Lord willing to reveal Himself in us, to fill our whole souls, to animate our every thought,

and inspire every act, and yet do we fail to appropriate His promise? When St. Paul cried, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection. and the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. iii. 10), think you not that His prayer was answered? It must have been, for every heaven-inspired prayer is. He was upheld by the power of Christ's resurrection; he did know the fellowship of His sufferings; nay, he did attain to a fuller knowledge and nearer manifestation of his Lord. And so will it be with all those that wait on their Master, filled with love and expectation.

The manner in which all the Three Persons of the blessed Trinity dwell in every believer is strikingly brought out by the language and order of three questions in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.

First, in I Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The first clause of this passage appears to refer to God the Father, particularly when we compare it with the parallel in 2 Cor. vi. 16-18. "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them. . . . And I will be a Father unto you."

Secondly, I Cor. vi. 15. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" At first sight the sense may appear slightly different. But it is only another aspect of the dual truth which the Master impressed on His disciples in John xv. 4. "Abide in me, and I in you." This union is only realized and maintained by the indwelling of the Spirit. How are we baptized into the one body? By one Spirit, into whom we have been made to drink. (I Cor. xii. 13.)

Thirdly, I Cor. iii. 19. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" Most undoubtedly is the entire abiding of God in the soul the work of the Holy Ghost. "In Christ" believers "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.)

And these are truths which the youngest and weakest babe in Christ ought to understand experimentally. "Know ye not?" indignantly asks the apostle of the Corinthians three times over. And all these Corinthians were "babes in Christ." Are you then a babe in Christ? Then you ought to know that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost dwell within you. And "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (I Cor. iii. 17.) The power to be holy accordingly has been made over to you, and it is God's will that you should walk in the Spirit.

In fact, we want to know what St. Paul calls twice over "the riches of His glory." (Eph. i. 18, iii. 16.) We must explore the glorious riches made over to us, and use them. Then shall we be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man. Thus shall we perceive the marvellous union of faith and love, and discover that only when both are possessed in the highest measure can we be "filled with all the fulness of God." Christ must "dwell in our hearts by faith;" that is, we must always know and believe that He is there, and we must also be "rooted and grounded in

love." Thus shall we be able to know that love of Christ which passes knowledge. God is love, and to be filled with the fulness of God we must be filled with love. What we have to be filled with is not the fulness of the renewed self, but the fulness of God alone. I must be filled, not by my love to Him, which will always be a scanty stream, but with His love to me. It is "knowing the love of Christ" that fills me with all the fulness of God. Not till I am emptied of self in all its subtle cleaving can I know anything of this fulness. No pondering on the muddy reservoir within will ever cleanse it; but a continual receiving from the Fountain above will both purify and fill the once unholy soul. That love gave itself for me; that love has purchased me; and shall not the redemption work be perfected until spirit, soul, and body are presented blameless and spotless before God? That love is mightier than my sins, larger than my defects, stronger than my helplessness, nay, stronger than my strength. That love is "strong as death," for death was its evidence and its climax. Many waters of coldness, opposition, and backsliding cannot quench this love, neither can the floods of Satanic malice drown it. (Song Sol. viii. 5, 7.) It hath a most vehement flame (according to the Hebrew, the very flame of Jehovah). And does not that flame burn as fiercely now as ever? Will it not burn up all the dross of your sinfulness, faint and trembling believer? All depends upon "the power that worketh in us." If we welcome that power, and give it full play, it will do for us not-less than the most sanguine Christians have ever supposed possible—but "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think;" it will "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Who is there unready to say, "It shall be mine?" "Who then is willing to fill his hands (Heb.) this day unto the Lord?" (I Chron. xxix. 5.) Who is willing to fill his heart, his soul, his whole being? Let him receive freely and fully.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. iii. 20, 21.)



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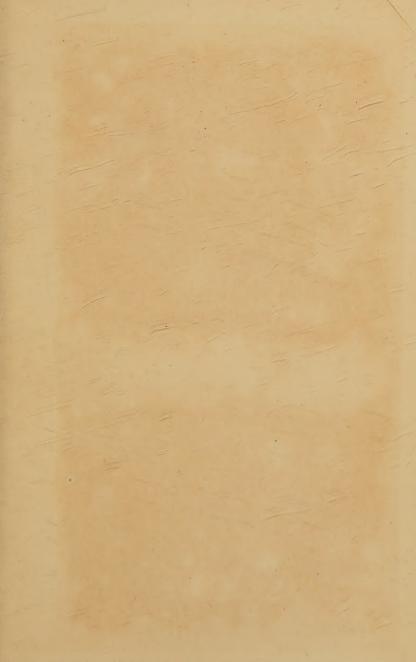
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